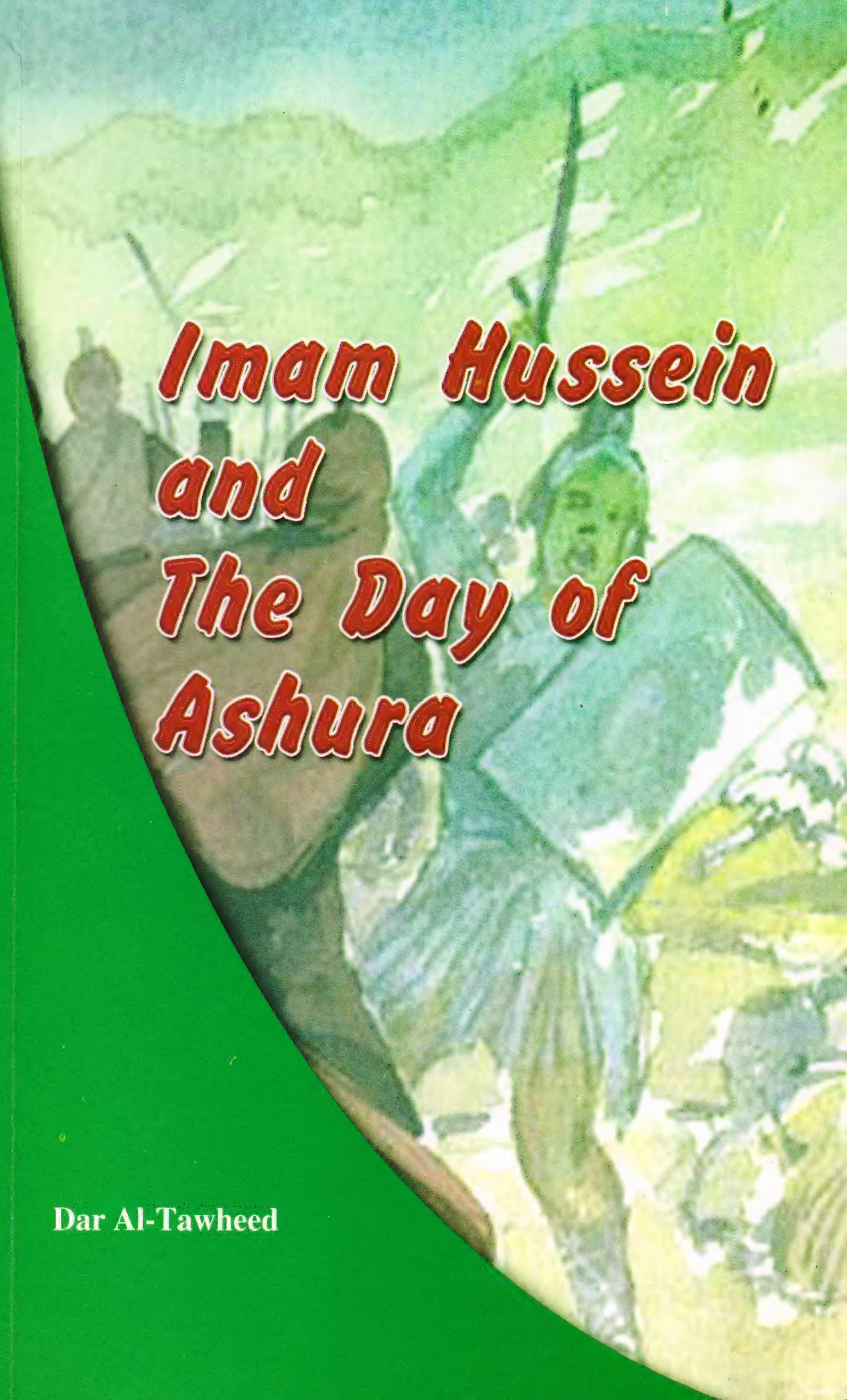
Imam Hussein and The Day of Ashura



Dar Al-Tawheed

IMAM HUSSEIN AND THE DAY OF ASHURA'

الطبعة الأولى
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دار التوحيد
للنشر والتوزيع
دولة الكويت
ص.ب ٢١٥٩٥ الصفاة
الرمز البريدي 13076
تلفون: ٢٦٣٢٦٩٥
فاكس: ٢٦٣١٣٩٢

Dar Al- Tawheed
State of Kuwait
13076
P.O.Box: 21595 Safat

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INTRODUCTION

﴿وَلا تَحْسَبَنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ قُتِلوا فِي سَبيلِ ٱللّهِ أمواتاً بَلْ أحياءٌ عِندَ رَبِّهِم يُرزَقُونَ﴾.
(١٦٩:٣)

"And think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead, they are alive, (and) by their Lord well provided".

Holy Qur'an (3:169)

The person of Hussein bin Ali (a.s.)* is a symbol, a school and a distinctly unique, political and religious revolutionary movement in the history of Islam. His was a tremendous undertaking which still reverberates throughout the Muslim nation. He has been a propelling force and a seminal element in events throughout Islamic history, particularly in the sphere of jihad (the holy struggle in the way of Allah). Hussein's example has remained vividly alive for generations and centuries. His uprising, movement and ideals still have a deep impact on the conscience and awareness of the ummah.

A host of political, social and religious factors made Imam Hussein(a.s.) rise to challenge Yazid bin Mu'awiyah. A key factor was the violation of the principles upon which Islamic rule is based. The main principles Imam Hussein(a.s.) desired to keep alive were:

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* (a.s.) stands for: (aleihi/ aleiha/ aleihim/ as-salam) which means 'Peace be upon him/ her/ them'.

1. Paying due attention to the public opinion of the ummah, and regularly consulting it in the conduct of affairs:

﴿...وَشاوِرْهُم فِي ٱلأمر...﴾.

(١٥٩:٣)

"...and consult them in the matter...".

Holy Qur'an (3:159)

2. Law and principles stand above everyone. They are the standard according to which the ruler is evaluated. The legality of his position, and his right to the exercise of power is similarly estimated:

﴿فَٱحكُم بَيْنَ ٱلنَّاسِ بِٱلْحَقِّ وَلا تَتَّبِعِ ٱلهوى...﴾.

(٢٦:٣٨)

"...so judge between people with justice and do not follow desire..."

Holy Qur'an (38:26)

﴿...فَٱحكُم بَيْنَهُم بِما أنزَلَ ٱللّهُ...﴾.

(٤٨:٥)

"...therefore judge between them according to what Allah has sent down...".

Holy Qur'an (5:48)

3. Establishment of justice and equity between all the people, regardless of social status in the sphere of rights and obligations.

﴿إنَّ ٱللّهَ يأمُرُكُم أنْ تُؤدُّوا ٱلأمانات إلى أهلِها وَإذا حَكَمتُم بَيْنَ ٱلنَّاسِ أنْ تَحكُموا بِٱلعَدلِ ...﴾.

(٥٨:٤)

"Surely Allah commands you to deliver trusts back to their owners and when you judge between people you that you judge with jus-

tice..."

Holy Qur'an (4:58)

4. Assuring the leader be both efficient and righteous so that he can discharge his responsibilíties:

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.)* is reported to have said:

"We are commanded to place people in their right positions".

5. Equity in economic distribution ought to be firmly instituted:

﴿مَا أفاءَ ٱللّهُ عَلى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أهلِ ٱلقُرى فَلِلّهِ وَلِلرَّسولِ وَلذي ٱلقُربى وَٱليتامى وَٱلمساكينِ وَٱبنِ ٱلسَّبيلِ كَيْ لا يَكونَ دولَةً بَيْنَ الأغنياءِ مِنكُم وَما آتاكُمُ ٱلرَّسولُ فَخُذوهُ وَما نهاكُم عَنهُ فَٱنتَهوا وَٱتَّقوا ٱللّهَ إنَّ ٱللّهَ شَديدُ ٱلعِقابِ﴾.

(٧:٥٩)

"Whatever Allah has restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns, it is for Allah and for the Messenger and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, so that it may not be a thing taken by turns among the rich of you and whatever the Messenger gives you, accept it, and from whatever he forbids you, keep back and be careful of (you duty to) Allah; surely Allah is severe in retributing (evil)."

Holy Qur'an (59:7)

Imam Ali (a.s.) is reported to have said:

"Even if all of it was my personal property I would have distributed it equally amongst the needy and poor. Then what is the situation when the property belongs to Allah?".

6. The right of criticizing, advising, guiding and discussing the policies of the leader should be respected and

* (s.a.w.) stands for: (sal-lallahu aleihi wa'aalihi wasalam) which means 'May Allah shower His blessings upon him and his holy progeny'.

institutionalized.

﴿وَلْتَكُن مِنكُم أُمَّةٌ يَدعونَ إِلى ٱلخَيرِ وَيأمُرُونَ بِٱلمَعروفِ وَيَنهونَ عَنِ ٱلمنكَرِ وَأُولئكَ هُمُ ٱلمفلِحونَ﴾.

(١٠٤:٣)

"And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong, and these it is that shall be successful".

Holy Qur'an (3:104)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) is reported to have said:

"The best of jihad is that of a word of right spoken to an unjust ruler"

Hussein (a.s.) witnessed the deteriorating political and social situation and clearly recognized that the general policy of the authorities did not jibe with Islamic principles. He was aware of the ummah's numerous and painful afflictions, and was determined to exercise his religious duty, being the duly sanctioned leader and central figure capable of restoring Islamic values.

Thus he rose. His revolt is rich in lessons and divinely inspired attitudes. Hussein embodied the sacrifice of self, money, family, social status and the challenge to terror and cruelty. He patiently traversed hundreds of miles, moving both night and day. The epic protest he engendered came at the most critical political juncture. In fact, the Prophet's grandson had vowed to sacrifice himself.

Eventually he was killed along with his sons, most of his household and all of his companions. The bodies were mutilated and their heads were carried from Karbala', to Kufa and finally Damascus. His womenfolk were taken prisoners and marched across the desert. He himself was expecting all that, but did not budge an inch.

An uprising led by the noblest and best aspected person-

ality in the entire ummah, is certainly one which is uniquely distinguished as a movement abounding with spiritual, moral and religious ideals. Due to the importance of this personality, we are honoured to present this concise, well documented book to our readers. Hereunder are related the most outstanding incidents of the dynamic Husseini movement, which stands unequalled in its greatness and fills pages upon pages of history.

Such a sublime revolution has to be studied, dissected and fully understood. Lessons should be drawn from it. Here we note that the backward and downtrodden nations must one day follow in the footsteps of Imam Hussein if they are to challenge the despots.

We beseech the Most High and Almighty to make this volume of enduring benefit to our esteemed readers and to help us in disseminating benevolence and guidance.

He is the Hearing and Answering.

HUSSEIN: THE REVOLUTIONARY

Karbala'...Karbala'...the garden of swords, blood and inspiration for innumerable pens.

Karbala' is the word of right..the hymn on the lips of time.

Karbala' is a poem..a rhyme of anguish and pain.

Karbala' never passes away. Its sun never sets in the horizon of history. Its anguish can never be effaced from the conscience of freemen by the collective conspiracy of tyrants.

At Karbala' clouds of blood rained and generations of martyrs and revolutionaries took root and sprouted. The sound of the fearless voice of Imam Hussein still echoes in the valley of al-Tufoof, ringing in the ears of time. It is a hurricane that chafes and shakes the tyrants. It is a volcano of blood, violently jolting the despots' thrones. It awakens free consciences and stirs within man the spirit of revolution and jihad. His voice is still echoing in the ears of mankind:

"By Allah, I will never give you my hand like a man who has been humiliated, nor will I flee like a slave".

Who actually is Hussein? What is the background of this exceptionally unique and great personality? This prominent man of history, the legend of epics, the word of pride and honour was no less the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), the son of his daughter Fatimah al-Zahra' and her cousin and husband the Commander of the Faithful, Ali bin

Abi-Talib bin Abdul- Mattalib bin Hashim.

The martyr Hussein was born in al-Madinah al-Munawwarah on the fifth of Sha'ban 4 A.H.[1], or, according to other sources, on the third of Sha'ban 4 A.H. His birth was applauded by the prophetic family. The Prophet (s.a.w.) himself named him Hussein.[2]

He was raised under the care of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.), his daughter Fatimah (a.s.) and the Commander of the Faithful Ali(a.s.) Hussein imbibed prophetic morals and drank deeply of the Islamic principles of justice and righteousness. He was dearly loved by the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.), who used to carry him and his elder brother Imam Hassan(a.s.) in his arms and declare expansively in front of his companions.

"O Allah, I love them and love those who love them".[3]

He expressed his deeply felt love for Hassan and Hussein (a.s.) in these words:

"These two sons of mine are my two plants of sweet basil in this world".[4]

"Whoever loves Hassan and Hussein then he loves me and whoever dislikes them then he dislikes me."[5]

The Apostle of Allah would offer his prayers while Hassan and Hussein would take turns in straddling his back. Some of the companions of the Apostle of Allah would try to remove them therefrom but he would respond:

"Leave them, may my father and mother be their ransom, whoever loves me, he should love them". (This account is reported by Abu-Hatam).[6]

"Whoever is pleased to look at a man from the people of paradise, then let him look at Hussein".[7]

Thus Imam Hussein was introduced to the ummah, while

still in the bloom of his childhood as a martyr. His status was identified by the Apostle of Allah lest the ummah do him harm.

Decades passed by. The disobedient forgot the words of the Apostle of Allah regarding the high rank of Hussein. They caused grief to the Apostle of Allah by brutally killing his grandson.

"Ibn Umar reminded Muslims of this as it was reported that,'Once Ibn Umar was asked about the hajj (pilgrim) and whether it was permissible to kill flies'. He retorted, 'The people of Iraq ask me about the killing of flies during hajj, whereas they had killed the son of the daughter of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.)'. The Apostle of Allah referred to them as, *'My two plants of sweet basil in this world'* [8]

History provides another insight, taken from Anas bin Malik, in which he compared two scenes; the first of which was that of the Apostle of Allah kissing Hussein on his mouth and hugging him. The second one showed Ibn Ziyad the Umayyad governor of Kufa, following the martyrdom of Hussein ,poking the head of Hussein which had been placed in a basin. He reported,

"After the murder of Hussein bin Ali (a.s.), his head was carried to Ibn Ziyad who started to poke at the teeth with his cane and said, 'He was good-looking'.'Let me disturb you', I said,'I saw the Apostle of Allah kiss the place you poke at on his mouth'". This account was reported by al- Dhah'hak.[9]

Abu-Bakr al-Siddiq said·

"I heard the Apostle of Allah saying: Hassan and Hussein are the two lords of the youth of paradise". [10]

Thus was Hussein in the heart of the Apostle of Allah and described in his divine message. He was brought up in the noblest and most dignified house in Islam: Namely the house of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.). Hussein partook of his virtues and principles, hence he was the symbol of piety and

the example of faithfulness, asceticism and worship. He was unflinching and brave in defending the ummah and of magnificently outstanding personality. He firmly adhered to right and was strong- willed (11) and never feared the censure of any censurer in defending the divine laws.

It is because of these majestic attributes, his ingenious personality, and his lofty social rank that Hussein was destined to become a dynamic, active force in Islamic history and his life a brilliant testament leaving an indelible mark on all generations. Honour enshrined the visage of Hussein in the heart of every freedom-loving individual who knows humanity's real worth and the merit of principle and values. The Muslims loved the household of the Prophet(s.a.w.) and revered Hussein (a.s.) as one of the Imams from this household. Consequently, the catastrophe of his loss set off continuous pangs of pain in the ummah's conscience, and became a ceaseless cause of sadness. For these reasons, this personality won the hearts and minds of people. The magnetic power of Hussein made emotions overflow and the hearts cling passionately to him. Poets, generation after generation, during these fourteen centuries created inspired verse concerning him. The wellspring of this particular literature has yet to dry up. The poetic and artistic depiction of deepest remorse created by that tragedy and sacrifice are still pulsing with life.

People wrote incessantly but the ink did not desiccate nor did expressiveness become stale. In his name uprisings were commenced, the spring of blood did not cease to flow, nor did the wills of aspirants to that noble path wane. In his name slogans were chanted and transformed into institutions that did not die. Nor did the myriad voices echoing the magnificently grand Husseini uprising trail off.

Muslims knew full well that it was the flesh of the Apostle of Allah from which the blood is still gushing on the dust of Karbala'. A heinous crime was enacted against the house-

hold of the Prophet(s.a.w.) that can never be expiated short of punishing the enemies of Islam and reviving the values of the revolt. Thus rebellions exploded and the penitents rose up in arms. The blood of Hussein was the catalyst that shook the Ummayad throne and pulled it down.

Feelings of guilt and the complex of having failed the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.) cemented in the Muslims' conscience in the wake of Hussein's martyrdom. As a result, men seeking vengeance rose up and movements dedicated to punishing the criminals were formed. This was characterised by the armed protest of the *'Tawwabeen'* (penitents) and al-Mukhtar who avenged the murder of Hussein. There was a series of revolutions and their repercussions have yet to die down.

Muslims have continuously sat in sessions for remembering Hussein. They relived the massacre of al-Taf from the very day of Hussein's martyrdom till the present. The wailing did not cease and the tears did not vanish. The calamity which is still vivid grows and interacts with the human conscience, affects the ummah's awareness and intensifies its feelings of grief. A literary school took shape and a Husseini tradition evolved which nurtures the tragedy and revives it and relates it perpetually to successive generations.

Thus was Karbala'; a brillaint torch for revolt against tyranny, a symbol for revolutionaries, a cause for grief and wailing. Hussein is a touchstone of love and loyalty erected in the hearts of every noble and free man.

He is the example for the self-conscious, uncompromising revolutionary...the one who advocated the rights of the oppressed. He is one of the near relatives of the Prophet whom Allah orders us to love:

﴿...قُل لا أسألُكم عَلَيهِ أجراً إلاّ ٱلمودّةَ في ٱلقُربى وَمَن يَقتَرِف حَسَنَةً نَزِد لَهُ فيها حُسناً...﴾.

(٤٢:٢٣)

"...I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives and whoever earns good, We give him more of good therein...".

Holy Qur'an (42:23)

Hussein was a member of the family of the Prophet (s.a.w.) whom Allah has kept uncleanness away from:

﴿إنّما يُريدُ ٱللّهُ لِيُذهِبَ عَنكُمُ ٱلرِّجسَ أهلَ ٱلبَيتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُم تَطهيراً﴾.

(٣٣:٣٣)

"Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a (thorough) purifying."

Holy Qur'an (33:33)

Hussein was one of those counted with the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) when the contest of prayers with the Christians of Najran was staged:

﴿فَمَن حَآجَّكَ فيهِ مِن بَعدِ مَا جَآءَكَ مِنَ ٱلعِلمِ فَقُل تَعالَوا نَدعُ أبنَآءَنا وَأبناءَكُم وَنِسآءَنا وَنِسآءَكُم وَأنفُسَنا وَأنفُسَكُم ثُمَّ نَبتَهِل فَنَجعَل لَعنَةَ ٱللّهِ عَلى ٱلكاذِبينَ﴾.

(٦١:٣)

"And whoever disputes with you concerning him (Jesus) after what has come to you of knowledge, then say: Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and ourselves and yourselves, then let us earnestly pray for the curse of Allah on the liars".

Holy Qur'an (3:6l)

SCENES FROM THE STRUGGLE

In the wake of the murder of the third caliph Uthman bin Affan, the Muslims pledged their allegiance to Imam Ali(a.s.), and they yielded the administration of state affairs to him. Mu'awiyah bin Abi-Sufyan declined to give allegiance to Imam Ali(a.s.). He declared himself free of his caliphal authority and subsequently appointed himself caliph of Syria, whose governer he had been under Uthman.

Upon examining the political history of that crucial era of Islamic history, it is clear that Imam Ali(a.s.) was face to face with three political blocs:

1. The Umayyad party led by Mu'awiyah bin Abi-Sufyan.

2. The Kharejites who left the army of Imam Ali(a.s.) and disobeyed him.

3. The group of A'ishah, Talhah and al-Zubayr bin al-Awwam.

After a period characterised by several battles and ceaseless political struggle between Imam Ali(a.s.) and these blocs, Imam Ali (a.s.) crushed the aspirations of A'ishah [12], Talhah and al-Zubayr in the well-known Battle of al-Jamal (the camel) that took place at Basrah. He also defeated Mu'awiyah at the Battle of Siffin. That episode ended in arbitration which Imam Ali(a.s.) refused to accept when he realized it to was purely political chicanery.

Mu'awiyah won the round of negotiations and the Kharejites left the ranks of Imam Ali's army. Later on, he was to

launch a fierce operation against them at al-Nahrawan, beat them badly and scattered their forces.

In the midst of all this strife, bloody fighting and political struggle, the Kharejites - who made plain their animosity against the Imam of the Muslims, Ali bin Abi-Talib(a.s.) - laid plans to assassinate Mu'awiyah, Amru bin al-Aas and Ali bin Abi-Talib. Thus, in the person of Ali bin Abi-Talib (a.s.), the ummah was to lose the dearest of its men, the vanguard of its pioneers and the bearer of its standard, the outstanding man of knowledge, jihad and good deeds.

The plot against history and humanity was carried out by Abdul-Rahman bin Muljam. He murdered the Commander of the Faithful Ali bin Abi-Talib(a.s.) by striking his head with a poisoned sword, during the dawn prayer, at Kufa Mosque, on the 19th day of the month of Ramadhan in the year 40 A.H. Imam Ali (a.s.) attained martyrdom on the 21st day of the same month.

The Commander of the Faithful was the head of state and renowned for his prowess in jihad and politics. He was a man of principle and doctrine devoted to justice and maintenance of lofty values. Ali never compromised at the expense of a right, or ignored a principle of justice. When he was assassinated, a new epoch was ushered in. A new and complicated political period ensued, in which the political equation was radically transformed and the social equilibrium of society's balanced evolution and political thought rendered unstable. Weakness crept into the rightly - guided caliphate. Mu'awiyah's influence began to expand.

In spite of the trust of the Muslims in Imam Hassan (a.s.) and his unique political and social status, to which the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.). made mention of to the ummah and despite the will of his father Ali(a.s.) and the ummah's allegience to Hassan as caliph after his father, no sooner was Imam Ali(a.s.) martyred then Mu'awiyah declared himself general caliph of the Muslims. He wrote to the Rightly-

Guided Caliph Hassan bin Abi-Talib(a.s.) demanding his abdication from power, while brandishing his sword and threatening to launch a war against him.

History preserved the letter sent to Hassan (a.s.) by Mu'awiyah and Hassan's response. Mu'awiyah wrote to Hassan bin Ali (a.s.) threatening him and demanding his relinquishment of the caliphate. His letter read:

"In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Allah, the Most Exalted, surely deals with His servants the way He wills. There is no repeller of His decree and He is swift to take account. Be cautious lest your death be at the hands of one of the villains from among the people. You should forsake the hope of finding weakness in us. Should you turn away from what you are trying to accomplish and pledge me allegiance, surely I would fulfill my promises to you and grant you whatever you ask for. Thus, I would be as A'sha bani Qays bin Tha'labah described: 'Should someone trust you with something, then make over the trust to him, so after demise you will be called trustworthy. Do not envy your master when he is opulent. If destitute, then, do not turn away from him'. You shall be my successor, in as much as you are more entitled to the caliphate. Wassalam".

Imam Hassan bin Ali (a.s.) answered him:

"I have received your letter, in which you mentioned whatever you wanted to. I have not declined to answer you lest I may do you injustice and I take refuge in Allah from that. Follow right, then you will surely know that I am righteous. The sin of what I say, if I lie, is upon me. Wassalam".[13]

Imam Hassan could not yield to Mu'awiyah or even consider giving up the caliphate. His position was legal and the people had pledged their allegience to him as their leader and caliph. He thus prepared himself and mobilized the people and went to war against Mu'awiyah bin Abi-Sufyan. The military scales tipped in favour of Mu'awiyah, due to the treason of several of Hassan's officers and the letters

Mu'awiyah sent to his prominent supporters, bribing them with the promise of high posts. Imam Hassan had no alternative but to preserve the blood of the Muslims. He ceased hostilities to protect the Islamic entity from outside enemies (i.e. the Romans). He did so temporarily till everything calmed down and conditions would be more to his advantage.

He signed a peace treaty with Mu'awiyah so that the ummah would be guaranteed a stable political atmosphere after the demise of Mu'awiyah. Thus Imam Hassan was forced to give up his right to the caliphate temporarily, according to conditions and agreements preserved by history and reported in different formulas and texts.

The agreement was as follows:

1. This is the agreement concluded between Hassan bin Ali bin Abi-Talib and Mu'awiyah bin Abi-Sufyan: According to which Hassan gives up the caliphate in favour of Mu'awiyah on the condition that he should rule over the Muslims according to the Book of Allah and the practices of the Apostle of Allah and the rightly-guided caliphs. Mu'awiyah should never appoint anyone after him as his successor.(14)

2. Hassan is the designated caliph after Mu'awiyah.(15) However, should anything happen to Hassan, then Hussein will take over as the head of state.(16)

3. Mu'awiyah should not claim anything against the people of Madinah, Hijaz and Iraq on account of their attitudes during the reign of his father, Imam Ali(a.s.).(17)

4. His governors of the provinces should not curse the Commander of the Faithful from the pulpits, nor mention him with abusive remarks, nor curse him during the qunut (prayer) of the ritual prayers.(18)

5. All people are secure wherever they are.(19)

6. Mu'awiyah has no right to manage the bait-ul-maal (public treasury) in Kufa. Hassan alone is entitled to manage it.

7. Mu'awiyah should not expose to evil neither Hassan nor his brother Hussein, nor their followers, supporters, or women. He should not confiscate their property.

These items were written and mutually agreed upon. Hardly was the agreement concluded, when Mu'awiyah addressed his partisans:

"...indeed I have promised to give Hassan to give certain things and I have given things to him. All of them are now under my foot. And from now onwards I will not fulfill anything".[20]

Thus the rightly-guided caliphate came to an end with the abandonment of the caliphate by Imam Hassan bin Ali (a.s.). He returned to Madinah after administering the people's affairs, following the martyrdom of his father, Imam Ali (a.s.), for a period of six months.

Indeed, that was not the end of the whole affair. War and strife which began on the very first day of the conflict in Islam between the Umayyads and the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.), did not cease. Practically, Hasanain (Hassan and Hussein) shut themselves off from the political domain. The campaign against the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and their followers was intensified by Mu'awiyah and tensions mounted. It was after the death of Hassan (a.s.)[21] when the people turned to Hussein (a.s.) and decided on giving him their pledge of allegiance and deposing Mu'awiyah.

Mu'awiyah had something else in mind. He determined to appoint his son Yazid[22] to rule the Muslims after him and receive their oath of allegiance on his behalf. That was a blatant violation of the Islamic traditions and rules for appointing the Muslim caliph. This decision stirred widespread agitation among the faithful, particularly amidst prominent personalities such as Hussein bin Ali (a.s.), Abdul-Rahman bin Abu-Bakr, Abdullah bin al-Zubayr, Abdullah bin Umar and other well- known, leading figures.

The historians have clearly conveyed this attitude of

expressing refusal and laying down a challenge. Below are some examples·

"In the year 50 A.H. Quhistan was forcefully taken (by the Muslims). There Mu'awiyah called on the people of Syria to pledge their allegiance to his son Yazid as his successor. They did so. He was the first one to appoint his son to succeed him and the first ever to do so during his life.

"Subsequently, he wrote to Marwan bin al-Hakam in Madinah to take the pledge of allegiance on behalf of his son. Marwan addressed the people saying, 'The Commander of the Faithful has the view of nominating his son to rule over you. It is the practice of Abu-Bakr and Umar'. At that point Abdul-Rahman bin Abu-Bakr al-Siddiq interrupted him, 'Nay, it is the practice of Khosrow and Caesar. Surely Abu-Bakr and Umar did not nominate their sons to succeed them, or anyone of their kinsmen'.

"Thereafter, in the year of 51 A.H. Mu'awiyah made the hajj (pilgrimage) and secured the allegiance for his son. Then he sent for ibn Umar, ... and said, 'O, ibn Umar! You used to tell me that you did not pass a night without being under the rule of a prince (i.e. a ruler). I warn you not to cause discord, or make mischief among the Muslims'.

"Ibn Umar praised Allah, then said, 'There had been caliphs before you who had sons. Your son is not better than them. They did not do for their sons what you did for yours. But they chose for the Muslims what they viewed as best. You warn me against sowing the seeds of disharmony among the Muslims. I will never do that. But I am one of the Muslims. When they agree on anything I will adhere to it'. 'May Allah have mercy on you!', said Mu'awiyah. When ibn Umar left Mu'awiyah sent for ibn Abu- Bakr, who gave the two testimonies. Mu'awiyah then talked, 'We wish you would leave you - as regarding my son-to Allah', ibn Abu-Bakr interrupted him, 'By Allah, we will never do that. By Allah, you should turn this affair over to the Muslims for consultation.

or we will force you to reconsider the matter'. With that he rose to his feet and quickly left. 'O Allah, Mu'awiyah asked Allah, suffice me against him by whatever you will'. and he added, 'Man, wait a minute! Don't tell the Syrians anything of all this. I fear they might attack you. Wait till the evening, when I will tell them you have given us the pledge of allegiance, then you can do whatever you wish'. Then he sent for Ibn al-Zubayr and said to him, 'O Ibn al-Zubayr, you are nothing but an elusive fox, going into one lair and coming out of another. You have lured these two men into changing their opinions'.

'If you are uninterested in the rulership,' retorted Ibn al-Zubayr, 'then give it up. If you bring your son along to pledge him our allegiance, suppose we did so, whom of you should we obey and listen to? It is impossible to pledge our allegiance to both of you'. On saying this he left.

"Mu'awiyah ascended the pulpit. After praising Allah he said, 'We have seen that what the people talk about is flawed. Allegedly, they said that ibn Umar, ibn Abu-Bakr and ibn al-Zubayr will not give their pledge of allegiance to Yazid. But they have obeyed him, listened to him and pledged their allegiance to him'.

'By Allah, retorted the Syrians, 'We will not be pleased until they pledge their allegiance to him publicly, otherwise we will behead them'.

'Glory be to Allah', he replied he, 'How the people hasten to expose the Quraysh to evil. I will never hear this from you another time'.

"Then he got down from the pulpit. The people were gossipping, 'Ibn Umar, ibn Abu-Bakr and ibn al-Zubayr have pledged their allegiance', they would assure them. 'No, by Allah we have not done it', and the people would repeat again, 'Yes, you did'. Then Mu'awiyah set off for Syria."[23]

HUSSEIN'S DEVOTION

Islamic law organizes political behaviour, and bases it on perfectly set doctrinal, ethical, and legal principles. It has also imparted a special status to the treaties and agreements.

The Almighty says:

﴿يا أيُّها ٱلَّذينَ آمَنوا أوفوا بٱلعُقودِ...﴾.

(١:٥)

"O you who believe! fulfill the contracts ..."

Holy Qur'an (5:1)

And He says:

﴿... وَأَوْفُوا بِٱلعَهدِ إنَّ ٱلعَهدَ كانَ مَسؤولاً﴾.

(٣٤:١٧)

"...and fulfil the promise; surely (every) promise shall be questioned about."

Holy Qur'an (17:34)

The Imams of the household of the Prophet(s.a.w.) represented the examples and the vanguard in their behaviour and ethical commitment. Their practical political behaviour was a genuine personification of the political jurisprudence in Islam. Never was the "ends justify the means" their policy, when dealing with the masses, or with their adversaries and opponents. Islam views politics as being based on ethical and

spiritual grounds. That was why Imam Hussein (a.s.) turned down the demand of the Iraqi masses loyal to the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.), who bore the brunt of the Umayyad oppression, when they turned to him after the martyrdom of Imam Hassan and sent him urgent letters demanding the overthrow of Mu'awiyah and giving the Imam their allegiance. He made it clear to them he would not accept the offer. He choose to abide by the treaty between Hassan(a.s.) and Mu'awiyah and would not break it.

Sheikh al-Mufid recorded his position as follows:

"This is what was reported by al-Kalbi, al-Mada'ini and other historians: When al-Hassan(a.s.) died, the Shi'a in Iraq began to make plans. They wrote to Hussein(a.s.) concerning removing Mu'awiyah and giving the pledge of allegiance to him. However, he refused and pointed out that there was an agreement between himself and Mu'awiyah which he could not break until the period of the contract came to an end. However, when Mu'awiyah died, he informed them he would examine the matter".[24]

THE ROLE OF HUSSEIN

Mu'awiyah overcame all obstacles and stiffened his grip on the people supported by money, shrewdness and terror. He then passed power to his son Yazid. With all this already done, the Umayyad party still felt insecure over the state of affairs. The new ruler could never challenge the ummah's values and principles for the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) had sown the seeds of love towards his household, and the Qur'an infused a living cultural spirit and certain political values into its depths. The ummah clearly knew the attributes of the Imam, and were to recognize him as the leader. It knew its political duty and lucidly stated its historical role. It refused despotism and the concept of inheritance in politics which was imposed on it.

Twenty years of the Umayyad party's rule and its monopolizing of money, power and all major administrative posts was certainly sufficient to stimulate the ummah to rise and smooth the way for the removal of Yazid bin Mu'awiyah who had been forcefully imposed upon it. Naturally, when trials intensify and crises follow in rapid succession and the ummah found itself encircled by a wall of terror and political despotism, the ummah looked to the opposition figures, the wise ones and the pivots of the movement that represented the revolutionary spirit. At the time, there was no one qualified to lead the ummah except Hussein bin Ali bin Abi Talib(a.s.). He was the lord of the sons of Quraysh, the

grandson of the Apostle of Allah, the son of the Commander of the Faithful and the best of men in knowledge, piety, efficiency and morality. No Muslim could ignore him, or was unacquainted with him. They knew his uncompromising attitude vis-a-vis Mu'awiyah's appointment of his son Yazid as his heir apparent to the caliphate. On the other hand, Mu'awiyah himself feared him, owing to his ability to lead the ummah, stir its inner feelings, and mobilize it to rise up in arms.

Yazid, too, knew full well the strong tie connecting the ummah to Hussein. He certainly realized that Hussein was firm, intense, and revolutionary. He was aware of Hussein's refusal of his succession to the caliphate as well. Therefore, his full attention was focused on Hussein and so were his fears. In the course of the first days of his assuming power he wrote to al-Walid bin Utbah bin Abi Sufyan the governor of Madinah a letter that read:

"...get Hussein, Abdullah bin Umar, and Ibn al-Zubayr to pledge their allegiance, and allow them no delay in doing this..."[25]

Al-Walid received the letter and word about Mu'awiyah's death [26], the announcement of Yazid's succession to the caliphate and his duty of getting the persons mentioned in the letter to give Yazid their oath of fealty. It was a politically burdensome task indeed and a heavy responsibility. He mentioned nothing about the letter to anyone and pondered for some time. Then he called Marwan to inform him of the situation and consult him on how to carry out Yazid's bidding concerning Hussein, lest the matter get out of hand.

Marwan offered no advice except terror, and tough measures. He counselled al-Walid:

"I take the view of calling them now and ordering them to give their pledge of allegiance. If they do so, you should accept that of them and leave them. However, upon denying

that, you should behead them before they know of Mu'awiyah's death. Should they know it, then every one of them would leap into a place from which he would oppose the caliph and call the people to follow him. Ibn Umar, however, does not approve of waging war. He would not like to rule over people unless he attains rulership peacefully."[27]

The consultation was over, the line of action was defined and the position was adopted. They hastened to besiege Hussein and take him off guard. That was an adequately appropriate measure – as al-Walid thought – before word of Mu'awiyah's demise spread and before public opinion was stirred and people would turn to Hussein, the grandson of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.), and give him their vows of loyalty.

"Al-Walid sent Abdullah bin Umar bin Uthman – who was just a lad – to Hussein and Ibn al-Zubayr to ask them to call on al-Walid, He found both of them seated in the mosque. He met them at a time when al-Walid would not receive people in a general assembly. He said to them: 'Answer the governor's call'. 'Go away, we will call on him soon,' they told him..."[28].

It was an unusual situation. This was not lost on Hussein (a.s.) who wondered what the whole matter was about? What was al-Walid up to?

Imam Hussein (a.s.) and Ibn al-Zubayr simultaneously understood the criticality of the situation. They both realized that something new had taken place and an unusual political situation had arisen, otherwise what was al-Walid's order for? Why did it come at a time when al-Walid would not usually receive people?

"Why do you think he (al-Walid) sent for us for at this time when he does not receive anyone?', Ibn al-Zubayr wondered.

"I think their tyrant (Mu'awiyah) has died. He sent for us to get us to give our pledge of allegiance before the news of Mu'awiyah's

death spreads among the people," Hussein answered him.

"I don't think otherwise. Now, what are you going to do?" asked Ibn al-Zubayr.

"I will gather my retainers now and go to meet him, I will leave them at the door and go in his presence", Hussein (a.s.) answered.

"I fear lest he harms you when you go into (his place)", Ibn al- Zubayr replied.

"I will not meet him unless I am able to prevent him from doing any harm to me". (29)

Thus Hussein prepared himself to face the Umayyad plot, realizing the need for quick action and knowing the way of dealing with this faction, he said:

"I will not meet him unless I am able to prevent him from doing any harm to me".

These words summed up the decision taken by Imam Hussein (a.s.) to firmly, undauntedly and uncompromisingly challenge the power of Yazid. This was his response to Yazid's assuming power. He knew Yazid well and realized his political, moral and spiritual unworthiness. To divest Yazid - the oppressive usurper of power - of legitimacy, there had to be jihad and an uprising. The sword had to be lifted and blood shed.

Hussein (a.s.) the Lord of the Martyrs, sent for his brothers, his kinsmen and entourage. There, around him, gathered thirty courageous men. He moved to meet al-Walid, accompanied by his bodyguards and aides, ready to fight. He would never yield to Yazid. Not an iota of feebleness was in his style of argument. In him was the heart of Ali bin Abi Talib and in his hand was the sword of right. In him was the breath of prophethood, the firmness of Imamat, and the honour of manliness.

Hussein went to the palace of al-Walid. Marwan bin al-Hakam was present there. Hussein placed his men in a spot

from which they could witness what was going on and in case of emergency, come to his help. There they seated themselves so that nothing would escape them. A watchword was agreed upon between Hussein (a.s) and his companions beforehand, as a precautionary measure.

He had ordered them,

"If I call you, or you heard my voice raised then come to my help altogether. Otherwise stay where you are till I return to you". [30]

Hussein (a.s.) came over to where al-Walid was sitting. Greeting the two men, he sat. Al-Walid told him about the death of Mu'awiyah. Then he asked him to give his pledge of allegiance to Yazid.

"O prince! pledge of allegiance cannot be given secretly. When you call the people tomorrow, call me with them", Hussein (a.s.) suggested.

Marwan, at that point, interrupted him, "O prince, don't accept his offer. If he declines to give his pledge of allegiance then cut his head off."

Upon hearing this Hussein got angry and retorted,

"Woe to you, O son of a foreign woman, will you cut my head off? By Allah, you have told a lie and showed your base origin."

Then he turned to al-Walid and said to him,

"O prince! We are the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.). We surely are the centre of the message, and to our house the angels descend from heaven. By us Allah sent his first Apostle and by us He sent the seal of the Prophets. Yazid, on the other hand, is a corrupt man, who imbibes wine, puts to death the soul which Allah forbids to be destroyed and declares his debauchery in public. A man like me would never give a vow of loyalty to him. But we will see about that in the morning, so will you. We will see and so will you, who is more entitled to the office of caliphate and to receive the pledge of allegiance,". With that Hussein (a.s.) left.

"You disobeyed me", Marwan told al-Walid.

"Woe to you. You have chosen for me something which

would have involved the destruction of my own faith and life. By Allah, I would not want all that exists of worldly wealth (as a reward) for killing Hussein. By Allah, surely a man responsible for the blood of Hussein, will weigh little in the scales of Allah, on the Day of Resurrection. Allah will never look at him, nor will He purify him, but a painful punishment is in store for that soul".[31]

The meeting came to an end. Hussein returned home. He was bent on making a war against Yazid. He began to make suitable preparations. Makkah would serve as his base to declare war and be the place where he would mobilize his forces.

The Uprising: Why?

THE UPRISING: WHY?

Hussein (a.s.) made no secret of the true motives behind his leaving Madinah and why he was declaring war against Yazid. He gave unambigiously clear answers to those who wanted to know. He outlined the identity of his movement, and the principles according to which he would challenge the new Umayyad regime. All the above points were listed in a letter he sent to his brother Muhammad bin al-Hanafiyyah.

He underlined, further, that the deterioration of the political; social and ideological situation and his onerous responsibility for reforming the ummah, impelled him to move and leave Madinah, to lead the opposition against the new Umayyad rule.

His letter read:

"...I am not taking up arms in order to make merry, or be ecstatic over what I possess. I am not making mischief, nor excercising oppression. But I am ready to fight for the sole goal of seeking reform of the ummah of my grandfather the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.). I want to enjoin good and forbid evil and guide the affairs of the people as my grandfather and father were doing..." (32)

He thus summed up the cause behind his refusal in giving pledge of allegiance to Yazid:

"Yazid is a corrupt man, who imbibes wine, puts to death the soul which Allah forbids to be harmed and declares his debauchery

in public. A man like me would never give pledge of allegiance to him." [33]

Islam explicitly stipulates that the leader of the ummah must abide by the principles of justice and equity. He should hold the laws of sharia and the will of the ummah in highest esteem. Sovereignty of the law is a matter of no compromise on his part. He should refrain from ruling oppressively and misappropriating his post as a way to gain wealth, luxury and a monopoly of property and privileges.

As well-known by both Hussein (a.s.) and the generality of the ummah, Yazid was obviously unfit to lead. He was a libertine, whose key focus was on making mischief. Yazid was totally engrossed in womanizing, drinking wine, playing with monkeys, reciting poetry, horse-racing and hunting.

The entire ummah agrees upon the fact that leadership ought not to be granted to anyone who lacks the ability of being an exemplary leader in his deeds, morals and understanding the import of the divine laws. He must also be politically efficient. Thus how could Hussein (a.s.) - the son of the daughter of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) and the sole leader of the ummah, the centre of the hopes of the people - yield to Yazid?

It was for those reasons that Hussein (a.s.) declined to give an oath of allegiance to Yazid and set his heart on taking up arms against him. He made his case public in his correspondence with his followers in different cities of the Islamic state, making it clear why he chose to rise. In the meantime, he explained the deviations being instituted by the oppressive and deviant regime.

In his letter to the Kufans Imam Hussein (a.s.) pointed out the qualifications of the true Imam, so as to nurture their political awareness and clearly identify the person worthy of being the leader of the ummah:

"...for by my life, what is the Imam except one who judges by the

Book, one who upholds justice, one who professess the religion of truth and one who dedicates himself to the essence of Allah". [34]

He also wrote to the key leaders of Basrah, who were: Malik bin Masma al-Bakri, al-Ahnaf bin Qays, al-Munthir bin al-Jarood, Mas'ud bin Amru, Qays bin al-Haytham and Amru bin Obayd bin Mu'ammir. One of his retainers, Sulayman (Aba-Razin), delivered the letter to them. It read:

"...I call on you to abide by the Book of Allah and the practice of His Apostle (s.a.w.). The Prophet's practice has now been put aside, and heterodoxy revived. Should you grasp my words and obey me, then, I will most certainly lead you along the path of righteousness. And may Allah bestow peace and mercy on you". [35]

Hussein (a.s.) viewed questions of state, politics, the ummah, leadership and Imamate from the perspective of Qur'an. As opposed to that, Yazid viewed these questions from his castle of oppression. Leadership, in the eyes of Hussein(a.s.), was a vehicle to place the ummah on the road of guidance and reform, a means to nourish people with divine laws and build their characters and a tool to organize life and develop it towards good and perfection.

In his view, the Islamic state had the underpinnings of Islam, according to which it formulates its regulations and its cultural values. The state organs are assigned the task of protecting the principles and aims of the ummah. These organs are authorized by the ummah to institute rules, uphold justice and provide services. In all this, they are answerable to the ummah and Allah the Almighty.

Reviewing the Imam's letters, arguments, sermons and correspondence, along with the political, economic and social circumstances of the time, we can deduce the following realities:

1. Oppression and monopoly of power on the part of the Ummayads was a fact A distinct political class had taken shape. A tribal based party came into being which was the

Umayyad group. It monopolized power, wealth and administration, whereas the majority of the people were deprived of these instruments, so much so that the state became the private property of the Umayyads.

2. Murder, terror and shedding of blood prevailed.

3. The ummah's wealth was wastefully spent. A capitalist class came to light beside poverty and destitution. The majority of the government officials were lacking in the qualifications to discharge their duties.

4. Behavioural deviation became a social phenomenon. Corruption crept steadily into public life and its symptoms appeared in both individual and group behaviour.

5. Law took a leave. The whims and private interests of the rulers and governors was substituted for the sharia at critical points of the life of the ummah.

6. A group of people assigned with distorting the traditions of the Apostle of Allah(s.a.w.) and forging new, false traditions appeared. Dialectic groups such as the fatalists were formed to find suitable pretexts for the deviant political behaviour of the rulers.

History conveys to us figures and accounts attesting the decline of social morals and the gap that yawned between people and divine values. An in depth study of that epoch would maintain that the uprising of Hussein (a.s.) was an historical necessity. The deteriorating situation generated the motivations that led to the revolt. Hussein (a.s.) was left no choice except rising against oppression.

The Qur'an depicts a vivid picture of the degeneration of social security and peace:

﴿فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هٰذا ٱلْبَيْتِ * ٱلَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُم مِن جوعٍ وَآمَنَهُم مِن خوفٍ﴾.
(١٠٦:٣-٤)

"So let them worship the Lord of this House who feeds them against hunger and gives them security against fear".

Holy Qur'an (106:3-4)

﴿...مَن قَتَلَ نَفساً بِغَيرِ نفسٍ أو فَسادٍ في ٱلأرضِ فَكَأنَّما قَتَلَ ٱلنَّاسَ جَميعاً وَمَن أحياها فَكَأنَّما أحيا ٱلنَّاسَ جميعاً وَلَقد جَآءَتهم رُسُلُنا بِٱلبَيِّناتِ ثُمَّ إنَّ كَثيراً مِنهم بَعدَ ذلكَ في الأرضِ لَمُسرِفونَ﴾.

(٣٢:٥)

"...whoever slays a soul any one for other than manslaughter or (for) corruption in the land, it is as though he had slain all mankind; and whoever keeps it alive, it is as though he kept alive all mankind and certainly Our Messenger came to them with clear signs, then surely many of them thereafter commit excesses in the land."

Holy Qur'an (5:32)

The ruling party hung its sword and whip on the necks of the people. It opened wide its prisons for them and was engrossed in a vicious campaign against its enemies, particularly the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and the prominently active supporters of Imam Ali (a.s.), Hassan and Hussein (a.s.).

One of the enemies of the regime described the prevailing atmosphere, recalling those conditions for his companions in these words:

"You would be put to the sword. Your arms and legs would be cut off. Your eyes would be burnt with heated pokers. You would be crucified on date-palm tree trunks owing to your love for the household of your Prophet. You would remain in your houses, challenging your enemy".[36]

Mu'awiyah bin Abi-Sufyan decided to annihilate the opposition leaders of the followers and supporters of the household of the Prophet(s.a.w). He put to the sword such a large number of them that history cannot state exactly their number.

It is here deemed necessary to list a few of them.

One was Hijr bin Uday, who was a revered companion of the Prophet (s.a.w.), "Whom al-Hakim in his book *al-Mustadrik* described as the monk of the companions of Muham-

mad (s.a.w.)".[37]

Imam Hussein (a.s.) protested the slaying of this deeply respected friend of the Prophet (s.a.w.), along with his companions. The protest was recorded in a letter he sent to Mu'awiyah bin Abi-Sufyan. Hussein praised therein this righteous political personage in these words:

"Aren't you the murderer of Hijr from the tribe of Kinda, along with his fellow worshippers, who were condemning injustice, those who deemed the present heterodoxies a transgression of the faith and who would not fear the retribution of anyone? You have aggressively and unjustly slain them after giving them strongly sworn oaths and testaments", (referring to the fifth item of the peace treaty) ***that you would never punish them for something that transpired between you and them, nor because of a grudge you held for them".*** [38]

Owing to their firm opposition to Mu'awiyah and the announcement of their loyalty to Imam Ali (a.s.) and his offspring, a number of Hijr's companions were also slain. They were:

1. Sharik bin Shaddah al-Hadhrami.

2. Sayfi bin Shaddad al-Shaybani.

3. Abdur-Rahman bin Hassan al-Inzi.

4. Qabisah bin Rabi'ah al-Ibsi.

5. Kidam bin Hayyan al-Inzi.

6. Mihriz bin Shihab bin Bujayr bin Sufyan bin Khalid bin Munqir al- Tamimi.

Besides that Mu'awiyah also killed political figures and leading opposition pioneers who gave their support to Imam Ali(a.s.) and his offspring. These men included:

1. Amru bin al-Humq al-Khuza'i:

He was a venerated companion of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and an honourable migrant who enjoyed special status before the Prophet (s.a.w). He was beheaded in Mosul. His head was transferred to Damascus. His was the first head in the history of Islam to be taken from one place to another.

Eventually, the head was handed over to his wife in Mu'awiyah's prison. When the stooges of Mu'awiyah threw the head in her lap, for the purpose of further terrorizing her, she placed her hand on his forehead and planted a kiss on his mouth. Then she addressed them in these words:

"You have hidden it from me for a long time, then you sent it, after his being killed, as a gift. It is a welcomed gift, never to be abhorred."(39)

2. Abdullah bin Yahya al-Hadhrami and his companions.

3. Rashid al-Hujari, whose legs and arms were cut off before he was killed.

4. Juwairiyah bin Musahhir al-Abdi.

5. Awfar bin Hossyn. He was the first to be killed at Kufa by Ziyad following an argument between them. Ziyad had asked him about Uthman (the third caliph) and his answers were satisfactory for Ziyad. Then Ziyad asked him about himself (Ziyad). Awfar's answer apparently infuriated Ziyad,

"I have heard that you said in Basrah: By Allah, I punish the innocent instead of the sick and the one coming instead of the one leaving, inquired Awfar".

"Indeed I had said that", replied Ziyad.

"Then you have done a mess of a thing", retorted Awfar.

"The proud arrogant one is not the worst of the group", said Ziyad indignantly and he killed him."(40)

Ibn al-Atheer recorded the bloody account of events that took place in the city of Basrah in the wake of the peace treaty between Hassan(a.s.) and Mu'awiyah. He said:

"After Ziyad appointed Sumrah temporarily as a governor of Basrah, the latter killed great numbers of people. Ibn Sirin said: 'During the absence of Ziyad, Sumrah put to the sword eight thousand men'. 'Don't you fear you have killed an innocent person?', Ziyad asked Sumrah. 'Had I killed a double number I would never have feared', replied Sumrah. Abu al-Sawari al-Adawi said: 'Sumrah had killed, during a

single day forty-seven of my companions. All of them had memorized the Qur'an'".(41)

These are a few of the sanguineous pictures extracted from that period. They manifest the savage nature of the regime and its maltreatment of the ummah, particularly the opposition forces, those who staunchly adhered to the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and those that were independent.

To speak of the antagonistic propaganda against the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.) it suffices to say that the regime did not let a chance slip by without unleashing a vile, defamatory campaign against the grandsons of the Prophet (s.a.w.): Hassan and Hussein(a.s.). As for Imam Ali(a.s.), the authorities adopted a line of abusive, slanderous propaganda that found expression in the defamatory sermons from on the pulpits in which Imam Ali(a.s.) was vilified and his immaculate image distorted. This regime-inspired conspiracy infuriated the ummah on the whole and Hassan and Hussein, their supporters and followers, in particular. These elements were acquainted with Imam Ali(a.s.) and knew, how grand a Muslim he was and it was thus difficult for them to keep silent.

Al-Mas'oodi (the prominent historian) cites an anecdote that transpired between Mu'awiyah and Sa'd that underlines the fact that Mu'awiyah himself was behind the propaganda campaign.

Al-Mas'oodi narrated:

"Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari reported on the authority of Muhammad bin Habib al-Razi, on the authority of Abi-Mujahid, on the authority of Muhammad bin Ishaq on the authority of Ibn Abi-Naji' who said: 'Mu'awiyah went to perform hajj (pilgrimage). He made the tawaf (circumambulation) accompanied by Sa'd. Upon finishing his tawaf, Mu'awiyah went to the hall where he would receive people. He asked Sa'd to be seated on his bed.

Mu'awiyah then began to talk about Ali abusively. Sa'd moved a little and said indignantly: 'You sat me on your bed, then began to revile Ali(a.s.)? By Allah, had I had one of the merits that were Ali's, it would have been more valuable for me than if I had been given the whole of worldly wealth. By Allah, if I were the son-in-law of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) and had offspring like that of Ali, it would have been more valuable for me than if I had been given all the world's wealth. By Allah, had the Apostle of Allah said to me on the day before the Battle of Khaibar; *'Tomorrow, I will give the standard to one whom Allah and His Apostle love and he loves Allah and His Apostle. He never flees the battlefield and Allah will bring victory at his hands'*, it would have been more valuable for me than if I had been given the entirety of worldly wealth. By Allah, had the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) said to me on the day of the Battle of Tabuk, *'Aren't you pleased that you are in the same position with respect to me as Haroon was to Musa except that there is no prophet after me'*, it would have been more valuable for me than if I had been given the whole of wordly wealth. By Allah, I will never enter your house as long as I am alive. Then he left him."(42)

Ibn al-Atheer reported:

"Bisr bin Arta'ah was at the home of Mu'awiyah. He reviled Ali. Zayd ibin Umar bin al-Khattab – whose mother was Umm-Kulthoom the daughter of Ali – who was present there, hit him with a stick on the head and cut him".(43)

He, also, reported:

"When al-Maghira was appointed as a governor of Kufa, he sent Kuthayr bin Shihab to al-Rey as its governor. It was only when Ziyad substituted al-Maghira as the new governor of Kufa, that Kuthayr's habit of reviling Ali was approved of".(44)

Al-Mas'oodi, further, reported:

"Ziyad gathered the people at the door of his palace in

Kufa, urging them to curse Ali. Whoever declined, was put to the sword".[45]

This vicious campaign against Ali bin Abi-Talib (a.s.) lasted till Umar bin Abdul-Aziz assumed power. He put an end to it and purged the governmental system.

"Umar was deeply ascetic and unassuming. He dismissed the officials employed by the previous Umayyad ruler and employed the best of men, who adopted his method in discharging affairs. He put an end to the reviling of Ali (a.s.) on the pulpits and replaced it by the noble verse, *'Our Lord! forgive us and those of our brethren who had precedence of us in faith; and do not allow any spite to remain in our hearts towards those who believe; our Lord! surely You are Kind, Merciful.'* It was said the previous verse was, *'Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion...'*

"Still others said that both of these verses were ordered by Umar to replace the reviling of Ali (a.s.). The *ulama* (religious scholars) began to use them in the Friday sermon."

If we leave apart these impulses and motivations that encouraged the uprising on the part of the opposition, which, in turn, was calling for the putting into effect of the principles of justice and equality set forth by Islam, abiding strictly by these principles, aside from them, we will find in the economic domain other reasons for the uprising.

The ruling regime was intentionally ignoring the orders for economic distribution set forth by Islam. These laws emphasize equality in distributing wealth, ban monopolizing and maintain the necessity of securing welfare for the poor.

The violation of these laws resulted in the emerging of motivational stimuli towards uprising. The ummah turned to Imam Hussein to lead the movement. There were, then, many factors behind the revolt: economic, political and security reasons, among others.

The weaker classes felt the loss of their rights and the appallingly widespread poverty among their ranks. Whereas wealth was amassed in the hands of a certain stratum, while Qur'an warns:

﴿...وَٱلَّذِينَ يَكنزونَ ٱلذَّهَبَ وَٱلفِضّةَ ولا يُنفِقونها في سَبيلِ ٱللّهِ فَبشّرهُم بِعَذابٍ أليمٍ﴾.

(٩:٣٤)

"...and (as for) those who hoards gold and silver and spend them not in the way of Allah, give them the tidings of a painful punishment".

Holy Qur'an (9:34)

﴿مَا أفاءَ ٱللّهُ على رَسولِهِ مِن أهلِ ٱلقُرى فَللّهِ ولِلرَّسولِ وذي ٱلقُربى وٱليتامى وٱلمساكينِ وَٱبنِ ٱلسَّبيلِ كَي لا يَكونَ دَولةً بَينَ ٱلأغنياءِ مِنكُم وَما آتاكُمُ ٱلرَّسولُ فَخُذوهُ وَما نَهاكُم عَنهُ فَٱنتَهوا وَٱتَّقوا ٱللّهَ إنَّ ٱللّهَ شَديدُ ٱلعِقابِ﴾.

(٥٩:٧)

"Whatever Allah has restored to his Messenger from the people of the towns, it is for Allah and for the Messenger and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, so that it may not be a thing taken by turns among the rich of you and whatever the Messenger gives you, accept it and from whatever he forbids you, keep back and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is severe in retributing (evil)."

Holy Qur'an (59:7)

The economic structure during that period was thoroughly recorded by the historians. They wrote about the disturbed scales of economic distribution. Individuals were the possessers of great wealth. Certain ones took advantage of the Umayyad influence from the outset, during the latter years of the rightly-guided caliphs, at which time they literally piled up money.

"The historians, as an example, mentioned that Amru

bin al-Aas the governor of Egypt under Mu'awiyah, had wealth amounting to 325,000 dinars, 1,000 dirhams, crops worth 200,000 dinars in Egypt and the well-known estate at al-Waht in Egypt which was worth 10,000 dinars. Another one, Abdul-Rahman bin Awf, divided his inheritance into 16 shares, every share which was to be given to one of his women was worth 80,000 dirhams."[46]

"Marwan bin al-Hakam gained 500,000 dinars from the revenues of Africa",[47] Ibn al-Aas received a gift worth 100,000 dirhams,[48] "Abdullah bin Khalid bin Usayd received a gift worth 400,000 dirhams,"[49] "The wealth of Ya'li bin Umayyah was estimated at 500,000 dinars, in addition to debts people owed him and estates and many different instruments of inheritance all valued at 300,000 dinars,"[50] "Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, after his death, left 250,000 dirhams,[51] Sa'd bin al- Musayyab reported that Zayd bin Thabit left, after his death, quantities of gold and silver that might be broken by axes and money and estates worth 100,000 dinars as well."[52]

These figures, conveyed by the historians, outline, an exceptionally distinguished aristocratic class, It goes without saying that the aforementioned figures are merely samples. As a result, two distinct social classes took shape: a wretchedly deprived and poverty-stricken class on the one hand and an excessively wealthy class that possessed money, property, estates and so on, on the other hand. The Muslims who had witnessed nothing as worse as that before, began to move to rectify these wrong practices.

Hussein (a.s.) was the only choice for the people to turn to. He was eligible to be the ruler who could put into practice Islamic law. As for Yazid he could not play this role as he was, as described by the historians.

"The owner of beasts of prey, dogs, monkeys, panthers and he used to throw singing parties and drink wine with his companions. One day, after the murder of Hussein, he sat to

drink, with Ibn Ziyad on his right hand. He addressed the cup-bearer saying:

"Hand me a cup full of wine to satiate my bones, then bend and give a similar one to Ibn Ziyad. He is my confidant, and the one who fulfills my desires and led my struggle". Then he ordered the singers to sing those exact words.

"Yazid's governors and officials were influenced by his corruption. During his rule singing spread throughout Makkah and Madinah. Musical instruments were used. People began to drink wine in public. He had a monkey named Abi-Qais, that he would bring along with him to where he and his associates would drink wine. He would place a pillow for his monkey which was very vile. He would carry it on a wild she-ass, which had been tamed, with a saddle and reign. Abi-Qais would take part in competitions against horses on a fixed day. One day it won the race, and took the stick that was put at the end where the room entered at the track and came into the room at the head of the horses. The monkey wore an outer garment of red and yellow silk and a cap on its head made of coloured silk with anemone- rose patterns. On the horse was a saddle of red silk, with different coloured spots."(53)

All these factors converged to produce a great motivating force. For Imam Hussein there was only one alternative and that was to assume that sublime attitude which marked his name in history.

IN MADINAH

Early on Hussein fully realized the vicious plan of the Umayyad faction. He was quite sure that a painfully terrible affliction would befall the ummah. His legal responsibility called on him to rise as the sole leader, particularly when the ummah had nobody except him to save it. His staying at Madinah was of no avail. Politically, tension mounted, while public opinion was in disarray. Furthermore, the treaty between Mu'awiyah and Hassan (a.s.) was broken. Mu'awiyah in no way abided by it. Al-Walid and Marwan were pressing him to give his pledge of allegiance to Yazid. Once again they sent for him. His response was:

"Tomorrow, both of us will see what we can do". (54)

Hussein settled for a swift initiative to find a solution to the dangerously critical circumstances as a result of Yazid's accession to the office of caliphate, which was in open violation of the treaty between Imam Hassan (a.s.) and Mu'awiyah. Secondly, it ran counter to what the Muslims were accustomed to. Thirdly, Yazid was unfit for the leadership of the ummah. Fourthly, the Umayyad family had usurped the caliphate. Fifthly, the ruling family deviated from Islam and its laws. For all these reasons Hussein (a.s.) decided to set off for Makkah to put everything in order, preparing to begin his challenge to the regime.

Following the night of his meeting with al-Walid, the gov-

ernor of Madinah, and Marwan bin al-Hakam, who was one of the prominent Umayyad figures in Madinah and one of the Umayyad policy makers, Hussein (a.s.) gathered his family, entourage and companions and set off for Madinah. At that point the uprising began, the blood river dug its course in history and was destined to flow perpetually. Hussein embarked on his journey, fully realizing that the ummah had entered a politically and culturally new and dangerous stage. Given the fact that the Umayyad faction was in control of power, there was the urgent need to shake the sentiments of the ummah and shake it politically.

Great deeds, magnificent achievements and effective social changes cannot be brought into being unless there are illustrious men and highly principled leaders who live deeply in the conscience of the ummah and influence its awareness and guide the course of their communities.

Only Hussein (a.s.) was qualified to destabilize the Umayyad throne and initiate a volcano under Yazid. No matter what would be the ultimate result of the uprising, he was able to leave his stamp on the ummah and pave the way for jihad against the unjust ruler. Either decisive victory over the regime, or martyrdom were the only alternatives. If victorious, he would bring Islam to life, through putting its laws into practice. In case he attained martyrdom, then, the holy cascade of blood would flow through life's valleys, fertilizing other revolts and irrigating the orchards of martyrdom.

The holy caravan that set out on its journey to Makkah is assuredly a perpetual document of the Islamic message. Hussein (a.s.) emphasized the divine base and the legal and doctrinal principle of Islam. This was the method with which to deal with the oppressive ruler. He, for the first time in the history of Islam, imparted legitimacy to revolutionary movements against oppressive rulers.

Men gathered around Hussein (a.s.) and began the long path of struggle. Hussein took with him his brothers, sons,

his brother's sons, and the majority of his family with the exception of his half-brother Muhammad bin al-Hanafiya, who in the depths of his love of Hussein (a.s.) surfaced and hurried to advise his brother:

"Avoid giving your pledge of allegiance to Yazid and avoid the towns while you can. Then send your messengers to the people and summon them to follow you. If the people pledge allegiance to you, then praise Allah for that and if they agree upon someone other than you, Allah will not make your religion, nor your reason deficient on that account, nor will He remove your manliness and outstanding merit because of it. I am afraid that you will enter one of these towns and the people will differ with each other; a group will be for you and another against you. They will fight and you will be a target for the first of their spears. Then the best of all this ummah, in person, in father and in mother will be the one whose blood was most terribly exposed and whose family most humiliated."

"Where should I go, brother?", asked Hussein(a.s.).

"Go and stay at Makkah," he answered, "If the base is secure for you, it will be a means for gaining power. However, if it becomes dangerous for you, then you can take to the deserts and the mountain peaks and move from place to place so that you may see how the people's attitude towards the affair develops. Your best judgement will be made when you are facing matters directly. Things will never be more difficult than when you face them indirectly."

"Brother," replied Hussein (a.s.), "You have given advice and shown your concern. I hope that your judgement is correct and well-aspected, Allah willing."

Then he entered the mosque repeating to himself these two lines of verse of Yazid bin Mufarr'i:

"Neither will I offend the grazing cattle in the morning nor shall I be called Yazid. There will never come the day when I will yield submissively, and death watches me to back

off".[55]

Umar bin Ali bin Abi-Talib (his brother) spoke to him then and told him the news of his murder. Sayyid Ibn Tawoos said, "A group of people told me on the authority of Umar the genealogist (may Allah be pleased with him), who mentioned that in the last part of his book *al-Shafi* (The Curer); a work on genealogy; on the authority of his grandfather Muhammad bin Umar who said: I have heard my father, Umar bin Ali bin Abi-Talib (a.s.) narrating to my uncles, the family of Aqil, saying: When my brother Hussein (a.s.) denied the pledge of allegiance to Yazid at Madinah, I called on him and he was alone. "May I be your ransom, Abu Abdullah", I said, "Your brother, Abu Muhammad al-Hassan quoting from his father (a.s.)". At that point tears sprang to my eyes and I began to weep loudly. He embraced me and said, "He told you that I would be killed?".

"Be it far away, O the son of the Apostle of Allah", I said.

"I ask you and invoke Allah before your brother, did he tell you I would be killed?" he insisted.

"Yes", I replied, "Why don't you stand face to face with your enemy and pledge your allegience?".

"My father told me," he assured me, "that the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) had told him about his martyrdom and mine and that my grave would be near his. Do you think that you know something I do not know? I will not behave basely in the least. Fatimah will certainly meet her father complaining about the maltreatment on the part of his ummah towards her offspring. Surely no one injuring her would enter paradise."[56]

Hussein thus had then the way open to him to leave the city and be apprised of the public mood. He was never discouraged by his sympathizers who, nevertheless, told him they were afraid he would be killed. His was a will as firm as a towering mountain.

Umm-Salama, one of the Prophets wives, clung to him

and adjured him not to go. Then told him, quoting from the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w) that he would be killed. He informed her soothingly, ***"Indeed, I know I am going to be killed, mother."*** Abdullah bin Umar bin al-Khattab called on him and asked him to reconsider his decision to leave the city, urging him to pledge fealty to Yazid. In respone, Hussein refused to alter his resolve for challenging the regime. The ummah was being treated with grave injustice. How could he ignore that? He thus told Abdullah bin Umar:

"O Abu Abdul-Rahman. Don't you know that life is so worthless in the eyes of Allah that the head of Yahya bin Zakariya was handed over to a prostitute among the Israelites? Allah indeed granted the Israelites a delay and did not hasten their punishment...". (57)

FAREWELL TO THE APOSTLE OF ALLAH

After visiting the grave of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.), only then did Hussein leave Madinah forever. Never again would he enter the city of his grandfather, nor visit the grave of the last Prophet. The next meeting with him Hussein knew for sure, would be in paradise. He would therein be outfitted with the medals of martyrdom and the grief of the calamity.

Hussein(a.s) offered two cycles (rak'ahs)of prayer beside the grave of his grandfather Muhammad (s.a.w.) and then raised his hands in supplication:

"O Allah, this is the grave of your Prophet Muhammad(s.a.w.), and I am the son of the daughter of your Prophet. You know what I am going through. O Allah, I love good and detest evil. I beseech you, O the Lord of glory and honour and adjure you by this grave and its contents, to choose for me whatever pleases You and Your apostle,". [58]

The caravan then set off for Makkah[59], by crossing the desert. Hussein(a.s.) was accompanied by his male relatives and devote companions. Also accompanying him were his womenfolk, most notable his illustrious sister Zainab. Initiating the journey he recited the following verse:

﴿فَخَرَجَ مِنها خائِفاً يَتَرَقَّبُ قالَ رَبِّ نَجِّني مِنَ ٱلقومِ ٱلظّالمِينَ﴾.

(٢١:٢٨)

"So he went forth therefrom, fearing, awaiting (and) he said: My

Lord! deliver me from the unjust people". [60]

Holy Qur'an (28:21)

On his way to Makkah he met Abdullah bin Muti', who sympathized deeply with him and was haunted by the possibility of Imam Hussein's probable demise and the loss of the only soul who could sort out the problems of the Muslims.

Hopes centered around Hussein(a.s.) and hearts clung to him. There was no figure comparable to him which automatically rendered him the refuge off the ummah and the actuating force that could challenge uncompromisingly Yazid's power. Hence Abdullah bin Muti' told him:

"By Allah, should you be killed, we will be enslaved after you."

This statement reflected precisely the opinion of the Islamic world at the time. Abdullah bin Muti' was keenly aware of the oppression and eventual bondage being forced on the ummah and there was no liberator save Imam Hussein(a.s.). He emphasized this view by again swearing by Allah:

"By Allah, should you be killed, we would be enslaved after you".

He then asked Hussein(a.s.), in a bid to ascertain his attitude and know his next step, for Hussein's position was that of the ummah:

"May I be your ransom, what is your destination?", he asked.

"Now, I am going to Makkah. Then, I will ask Allah to guide me", replied Hussein (a.s.).

"May Allah guide you", said bin Muti', "and make us your ransom. After you have arrived in Makkah, do not come near Kufa, for it is an ill-fated city, wherein your father was murdered and your brother was betrayed and stabbed with a dagger that brought him well-nigh death. Stick to the House of Allah, for you are the Lord of the Arabs. The people of al- Hijaz will never accept a leader except you.

They will hasten to you from every destination. Do not leave the House of Allah, may my paternal cousin and maternal cousin be your ransom. By Allah, should you be killed, we will suffer bondage in your wake."(61)

It was a long way to Makkah(62). The desert sands were blazing fom the heat of the sun. Hussein's caravan penetrated this heat storm, crossing the sandy hills and burning, flat stretches. Hussein was following in the footsteps of his father, Ali bin Abi-Talib, who had led the caravan of *The Four Fatimahs,** challenging the pride of the Quraysh. He was, contrary to the custom of the time, marching during broad daylight.

The spirit of Ali was vibrant in his soul. The heart of that undaunted hero beat, like a mountainous drum in him. His family and devote followers feared the revenge of the regime. Ibn al-Zubayr, two days earlier, was pursued, but he took a side route, so that his would-be assailants lost him. Likewise, his family counselled avoiding the main route as a precautionary measure. By so doing, he could remain outside the grasp of the regime's outstretched hand.

Not surprisingly, Hussein(a.s.) insisted on taking the main route as a counteraction, an obvious protest and as a stimulus to excite the conscience of the ummah. Travellers and people on the whole would wonder: "Why did Hussein bid farewell to the city of his grandfather, the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.), while he is its lord, its son and the dearest of its people?" He would not back off. He was bent on challeng-

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*. The procession led by Imam Ali (a.s.) when he emigrated from Mekkah to Madinah and was accompanied by four women, all known as Fatimah, related to the Prophet's family namely:

1- Fatimah al-Zahra' the Prophet 's daughter.

2- Fatimah the daughter of Asad bin Hashim, Imam Ali's mother.

3- Fatimah the daughter of al-Zubayr bin Abdul-Mutalib, the Prophet's nursemaid.

4- Fatimah the daughter of Hamzah bin Abdul-Mutalib.

ing the authorities. "Why don't you avoid the main road, as Ibn al-Zubayr did, lest the pursuers catch up with you?", asked a member of his family.

"No, by Allah, I will not leave it till Allah judges what he will judge", he replied.[63]

The people of Madinah met in groups. There were the Muhajireen (Immigrants) and the Ansar (Helpers), among whom were the companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.). They sat discussing the immediate matter of the day: The grandson of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) had departed the city of his grandfather (s.a.w.). He was undertaking a great task. He firmly refused obeisance to Yazid. Why then was the ummah so silent?

In Madinah were the houses of Hussein and al-Zahra (a.s.), but now the black curtain of abandonment fell across them. Dreariness encased them like a cloud. Hussein (a.s.), left and the city seemed to burst into tears at his sudden absence. The Madinese hearts were besieged with grief and their souls fell prey to pain.

They were fearful Hussein (a.s.) might be abandoned by his supporters and eventually delivered into the claws of his enemies. The most brilliant of stars would fall from the sky. Those houses were locked in total darkness. His house was abandoned. The silent, black windows were eyes keeping watch on the road; when would Hussein return?

Just yesterday that house was lively with prayer. In its corners echoed the voices of worshippers. Therein was the trust and legacy of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.), the abode of al-Zahra' (a.s.) and the rest of family of the Prophet (s.a.w.). Madinah, then, emitted a grieved voice weeping for the departees.

Hussein (a.s.) once resided in that house. In that same house was the place the family of the Prophet (s.a.w.) used to sit together. There Hussein used to recite, expressing his love for Sukainah and al-Rabab:

"By my life, I love a house, wherein Sukainah and al-Rabab are, I love them and would give all my wealth, I would never listen to any blame on that account".[64]

The house itself was a facet of the protest; a citadel of struggle; a potent voice that would narrate the complete story to the people, from the very beginning, till the tragic end.

Hussein, in the meantime, was on his wearisome journey crossing the desert. It was on the third day, in the month of Sha'ban, that he reached Makkah, reciting:

﴿ولـمّا توجّهَ تلقاءَ مدْينَ قالَ عسىٰ ربّي أن يَهديَني سواءَ السبيل﴾

(٢٢:٢٨)

"And when he turned his face towards Madyan, he said: May be my Lord will guide me in the right path."[65]

Holy Qur'an (28:22)

In the Inviolate Sanctuary

IN THE INVIOLATE SANCTUARY

Hussein (a.s.) arrived in the city of the prophetic revelation and peace. He settled in the house of al-Abbas bin Abdul-Muttalib, to carry on his political organizing under the immunity of the Holy House of Allah.

Exciting and wonderful was his arrival. The people of Makkah and the worshippers who were making Umrah (lesser pilgrimage) went to receive him. Joyous and most exulted were the people. The news of Imam Hussein's arrival at Makkah and his departure from Madinah, after rejecting the oath of fealty to Yazid, spread quickly. Delegations and letters started to arrive from everywhere. He, himself, began writing letters and dispatching messengers. Hussein also began to urge Muslims to take up arms and revolt against Yazid's power and disavow the pledge of allegiance they had given him either through coercion or under the influence of bribes, all of which was contrary to Islamic law.

The process of setting the stage for the uprising began. In different parts of the Muslim world people held public meetings. The arrival of Hussein(a.s.) at Makkah was seen by the Muslims as an omen of coming victory. Likewise, political gatherings were organized in which the situation was analysed. By sitting in Makkah Hussein(a.s.), aimed at:

1. Stirring public opinion and assessing the majority's position toward the step taken by him.

2. Mobilizing people and analysing the political situation

in the light of Islamic principles concerning rule and legitimacy of administration.

3. Drawing up plans to lead the masses and defining the bases of the challenge considering the time, place and most appropriate strategies.

4. Accelerating the challenge and announcing the downfall of Yazid's regime, before establishing a rightly-guided state under the leadership of the Imam. This state was to be based on the teachings of Qur'an and Islamic principles.

These aims were reiterated in his correspondence, conversations and responses to the questions that were being asked. Ultimately, this step breathed new life into the masses. The spirit of uprising stirred in Iraq; the center of the forces loyal to the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.). At the home of Sulayman bin Surd al-Khuza'i, key opposition leaders held a meeting and discussed the political and social conditions following the death of Mu'awiyah and the passing of power to Yazid. As for Hussein(a.s.), they settled on supporting him and fighting as ordinary soldiers under his leadership. They decided to inform him of that by means of dispatching letters to him. Sulayman bin Surd al-Khuza'i rose to his feet and addressed the audience:

"Mu'awiyah has died", he said, "and Hussein has withheld his vow of obeisance to the people (i.e. the Umayyads) and has gone to Makkah. You are his Shi'a (helpers) and the Shi'a of his father. If you know that you will be his helpers and fighters against his enemy and that our lives will be given on behalf of him, then write to him and tell him of that. But if you fear failure and weakness, do not tempt the man to risk his own life." "No", they declared, "indeed we will fight his enemy and our lives will be given on behalf of him". "Then write to him," he told them. So they wrote to him."[66]

"In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. We praise Allah before you other than Whom there is no deity.

Praise be to Allah Who has broken your enemy, the obstinate tyrant who had leapt upon the ummah, stripped it of its rights, plundered its war-booty and seized control of it without consent. Then he had killed the best members of it, and preserved its most wicked ones. Now we have no leader. Therefore come; through you may Allah unite us under truth. Al-Nu'man bin Bashir is in the governor's palace and we do not gather with him for the Friday or festival prayers. If we learn that you will come to us, we will drive him away, until we pursue him to Syria, if Allah, the Exalted, wills, peace, mercy and the blessings of Allah are with you.

"They dispatched the letter with Abdullah bin Sabi' al-Hamadani and Abdullah bin Wal. Two nights later, they wrote another letter. In all, the people wrote some 250 letters to him. Then they sent a third messenger urging him to come to them. Shabath bin Rib'i, Hajjar bin Abjur, Yazid bin al-Harith, Yazid bin Ruwaym, Urwah bin Qays, Umar bin al-Hajjaj al-Zabidi, and Muhammad bin Umayr al-Tamimi wrote to him to this effect."[67]

Letters continued to arrive, the authors of which repeated the same lament:

"Now we have no leader. Therefore come; through you may Allah unite us under truth and guidance".

Still in other missives they pleaded:

"People are waiting for you. They then again wrote speed, speed".

Hussein(a.s.), for his part, wrote a letter to the Kufans, calling on them to close ranks and keep their word. The household of the Prophet (s.a.w.) knew already extremely bitter experience – during the times of Imam Ali(a.s.) and his son Hassan(a.s.) – in leading and ruling Iraq.

Hussein(a.s.) chose his paternal-cousin Muslim bin Aqeel as his representative, to gauge the situation and evaluate the truth in th Kufan's pledges of loyalty and thus pave the way for their giving the oath of allegiance to him.

The letter read in part:

"In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
From Hussein bin Ali.
To the leaders of the believers and the Muslims.

Hani and Sa'id have brought me your letters; they are the last two of your messengers who have come to me. I have understood everything which you have described and mentioned. The essential statement of the majority of you is: 'We have no Imam. Therefore come; through you, may Allah unite us under truth and guidance'. I am sending you my brother, Muslim bin Aqeel, who is my cousin and my trustworthy representative from my house. If he writes to me that the opinion of your leaders and of the men of wisdom and merit among you is united in the same way as the messengers who have come to me have described and as I have read in your letters, I will come to you at once Allah willing. By my life, what is the Imam except one who judges by the Book, one who upholds justice, one who professes the religion of truth and one who dedicates himself to the essence of Allah".[68]

Hussein also devoted great attention to the people of Basrah. He sent them a letter that read in part:

"In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

Allah surely had chosen Muhammad(s.a.w.) from among his creatures, and honoured him with the prophethood. Allah chose him for his message. He then summoned him, after he advised his servants and conveyed what he was assigned to convey. All his family, those who were appropriate for authority, testamentary trustees, inheritors and the ones most entitled to his status were still alive. But our people (referring to the Umayyads) monopolized the power and we accepted that, for we abhorred division and desired peace. While so doing, we knew that we were more entitled to the right that was alloted to us than those who seized it. I am sending you my messenger to hand you this letter. I am calling you to abide by the Book of Allah and the practice of his Prophet (s.a.w.) The way of the Prophet (s.a.w.) has been pushed into oblivion and heterodoxy brought to the fore. Should you listen to what I have to say and obey me, I will bring you to the path of guidance. May the

peace, mercy and blessing of Allah be with you."[69]

Thus the news of Hussein's movement spread to Basrah, a fortress of political activities and the largest Islamic city at the time, next to Kufa. The Basrans were the leaders of the opposition, while public opinion was in the main antagonistic to the Umayyads. Under the governors of Mu'awiyah the city endured deep-seated suffering. A meeting was hurriedly held at the house of Mariyya, a woman of the supporters of the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.). The participants resolved on supporting Hussein (a.s.) and giving him fealty. They first decided to send him a letter informing him of their decision.

Ibn al-Atheer recorded this meeting in his book 'Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh':

"Some Shi'a people met, in Basrah, at a house of a woman from the tribe of Abdul-Qays, named Mariyyah, daughter of Sa'da. She was Shi'a and opened her house for the Shi'a as their meeting place. Yazid bin Baneet, from the tribe of Abdul-Qays made up his mind to go to Hussein's aid.

"Who will go with me?", he addressed his ten sons.

"Two of them accepted the offer, Abdullah and Ubaidullah. They went to Mekkah and from there, along with Hussein left for Karbala' where they were killed."[70]

Yazid bin Mas'ud, who gathered Bani Tamim, Bani Handhalah and Bani Sa'd addressed them and exhorted them to help Hussein (a.s.). At the same time, he warned them against failing the Imam. A part of his sermon read:

"...Yazid, the one who imbibes wine and is a profligate chief, usurped the caliphate and has ruled over the Muslims in accordance to his caprices and without their consent., while being cruel, he is also ignorant and unaware of what is right. He can not even distinguish his own footsteps. By Allah, I swear according to the law that struggling against him is better than fighting the pantheists for the sake of faith.

"And here by comparison is Hussein bin Ali, the son of the Apostlė of Allah (s.a.w.), with his inherent honour and matchless outlook. His merit is indescribable and his knowledge can not be exhausted. He is more entitled to the leadership because of his past long services to Islam and kinship to the Prophet (s.a.w.). He is compassionate to children and a helper of the aged. What an exalted leader he is among his people. He is the Imam whom Allah has sent as a proof to people and through him the best advice has been given. Do not be blind to the light of what is right and do not dawdle in the pits of wrong thinking.

"Sakhr bin Qays was failed by you, in the Battle of al-Jamal (the Camel). It is a stain you should wash away by coming to the help of the son of the Apostle of the Prophet (s.a.w.). By Allah, whoever fails to help him, Allah would make his offspring servile and his kinsmen few. Here I stand having put on the armour of war and readying myself to fight. Whoever is killed will die a majestic death. He who escapes will pass away any way. May Allah have mercy on you so as to give me a satisfactory answer.

"O Abu Khalid," said Bani Handhalah, "We are the arrows in your quiver and the knights of your tribe. Should you use us as your arrows you will hit your target. Should you call us to enter a battle you will be victorious. By Allah, you can never wage a war without us, nor will you face difficulty alone. By Allah, we will help you with our swords and protect you with our bodies. Should you decide on going to fight, then do it."

"O Abu Khalid," Banu Sa'd bin Yazid told him, "The most despicable thing for us is disobeying you. Sakhr bin Qays had ordered us to abandon fighting, so we accepted peace and preserved our honour. Give us a delay for consultations among ourselves, then we will give you our final decision". "O Abu Khalid", Banu Amir bin Tamim declared,

"We are Banu Amir, the sons of your father and your allies. We will never be satisfied if you are angry, nor would we settle at home if you choose to leave. The matter is with you to decide. Call us and we will respond to you. Order us and we will obey you. The matter is in your hands."

"O Banu Sa'd," he confirmed, "Should you do it (i.e. fail to help Hussein (a.s.), by Allah, Allah will never lift the sword away from your necks, while still you hold your swords"..

Then he wrote the following letter to Hussein (a.s.):

"In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Your letter has arrived and I have understood what you call me to do and what you have invited me to achieve; namely to obey you and do my share in supporting you Allah never leaves the world without a man who does good and guides to the path of peace. You are the proof of Allah over His creatures and His deposit on His earth. You are a bough of the Muhammadan olive-tree. He is the trunk and you are the branch. Then come to us, may Allah satisfy you. I have convinced Bani Tamim and left them as eager to obey you as the hungry camels to have water after a long and wearisome journey. I have convinced Bani Sa'd and washed the filth from their chests with the rain of a cloud, that thundered and flashed lighting."

When Hussein received his letter he praised him:

"May Allah make you secure on the day of fear. And bestow dignity on you and satisfy you on the day of the great thirst".

When Yazid bin Mas'ud was ready to join Hussein(a.s.), he received the news of his martyrdom. Al-Munthir bin al-Jarood, on the other hand, took the letter and the messenger with him to Ubaidullah bin Ziyad, owing to his fear that the letter might have been a decoy sent by Ubaidullah. Bahriyya, the daughter of al-Munthir was married to Ubaidullah bin Ziyad. Ubaidullah crucified the messenger. Then he went on

the pulpit and threatened the people of Basrah with grave punishment for the rumours they spread and their disobedience. The next morning he deputized his brother Uthman bin Ziyad to rule Basrah, while he himself hurried to the palace of Kufa.[71]

Thus, it became clear where to begin the uprising. During the months of Sha'ban, Ramadhan, Shawwal, Thil-Qi'da and during Thil-Hijjah, Imam Hussein was carefully paving the way for an uprising. He had secured the needed base of support among the Muslims. Thus, when Muslim bin Aqeel read the letter of Hussein to the Kufans, they burst into tears and wailed loudly, asking him to hasten to them. Hussein, accordingly fixed the time and the place for the revolt, as they were the key preconditions for a successful movement.

With the already enthusiastic responses from the Shi'as in Iraq, Hussein decided to move thither and from there he would announce the establishment of the rightly-guided Islamic state. Iraq was the point from where the insurrection would start.

VANGUARD AND LEADERSHIP

"In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.[72]

To Hussein bin Ali the Commander of the Faithful (a.s.), from his Shi'a and the Shi'a of his father, the Commander of the Faithful. The people are waiting for you. They have no esteem for any man except you. Therefore make haste, o son of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.). The dates have grown green. The fruit has ripened. The earth is covered with fresh grass and the trees are verdant with new foliage. Thus if you want to, come to us, you will come to an army which has been gathered for you. Peace, mercy and the blessings of Allah are with you and your father before you."[73]

Hussein(a.s.) received this last letter and pondered over it. Then he asked the couriers about those who gathered to write it, as it was a pledge of allegiance and clearly contained a good estimation of the situation. The two messengers named the men responsible sending the letter.

The conditions were well described and the letter gave him proof of a propitious time in which to move. But he was not yet sure. The household of the Prophet (s.a.w.) had before had bitter experience with such pleas and promises. He shared such an experience with his father the Commander of the Faithful (a.s.) and his brother Hassan(a.s.). His was a fateful action and he had to make a wise decision.

With this purpose in mind, Hussein(a.s.) went to the Holy House of Allah. Patiently and calmly, he offered two

rak'ahs of prayer between the Pillar and the Stand of Ibrahim(a.s.) and asked Allah to guide him on the path leading to prosperity and success.

Hussein(a.s.) deemed it necessary to send as his representative a man to prepare everything for him and inform him of fresh developments. Accordingly, he would be able to decide the next step. He had to designate a courageous man to carry out that responsibility: One who was wise and unquestionably steadfast to the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.), the Imam and the ummah. He chose his paternal cousin, Muslim bin Aqeel. He sent for him and Muslim hurried to meet the Imam, who explained the circumstances and the contents of the letters sent to him. He informed him at length of the details of his assignment, so he would be capable of fully discharging his duty.

Muslim accepted the onerous task and listened attentively to the instructions of Hussein(a.s.):

"He ordered him to guard against evil, to keep his affair secret and work quietly. When, upon realising that the people were united to support him, he had to hasten to inform him of that." [74]

Hussein handed over the letter he had written to Muslim and ordered him:

"Go to the Kufans. If it is true what they had mentioned in their letters, tell me all about it, then I can join you".

Muslim headed towards Iraq from Makkah, on the 15th of the the month of Ramadhan, in the year 60 A.H, accompanied by a group of close companions and two guides. It was summer and extremely hot. The sun was burning, the road was long and the journey was painfully difficult.

It took them twenty days to travel from Makkah to Kufa. Muslim arrived in Kufa on the 5th of the month of Shawwal. He had met many dangers in the expansive desert he crossed. One night the two guides lost their way, so they travelled aimlessly. However, when the sun rose, they again found the

trail. Now, thirst and weariness had overcome them. Most frustrating of all, they were short of water. The two guides were completely worn out:

"They indicated the path to him after it again appeared clear to them. Muslim continued his journey and the two guides died of thirst".(75)

Muslim could do nothing concerning the fate of his guides, so he left them. He was compelled to pursue his journey, along with his companions, following the trail markers indicated by the two guides. They covered a long distance when they discovered an oasis, dismounted and camped there. They were completely exhausted and deeply distressed over the loss of the guides.

Muslim settled near the water which was known as al-Madhiq min Bani al- Khabt.(76) From there he wrote to Hussein(a.s.) informing him of the dangers they had encountered till that point. He added that he was waiting for further instructions in order to proceed with his task, adding that Hussein(a.s.) could relieve him from the assignment, if he so wished.

He rolled the letter up and entrusted it to a man from the tribe of al- Hay, Qays bin Musahhir, to deliver it to Hussein (a.s.) at Makkah. Upon receiving the letter Hussein(a.s.) sent an answer to Muslim ordering him to pursue his journey, while declining his offer of being relieved.

No sooner did the letter of Hussein(a.s.) arrive, then Muslim started off. On his way he reached an oasis where the tribe of Tay' camped. He stayed there for some time, then went on with his journey till he arrived in Kufa, as stated above, on the 5th of Shawwal. He was hosted by al-Mukhtar bin Ubaidah al-Thaqafi. He made that house the base of his political activities.

Muslim was thus messenger of Hussein(a.s.) and representing his leadership. The people eagerly hastened to receive him and declare their loyalty to him.

Muslim began to contact a variety of people and commenced his political activities energetically and patiently. He gathered supporters around him, mobilised people and took the pledge of fealty from them on behalf of Hussein (a.s.). Tens of delegations declared their loyalty to Hussein (a.s.). The masses were so moved that while listening to the letter of Hussein(a.s.) being read by Muslim, tears welled in their eyes.

Muslim was able to gather a large number of people. Those who pledged their allegiance and declared their readiness to aid him numbered nearly 18,000.[77] He thus had a strong base of support and through that huge force could overcome any difficulties, no matter how great and numerous they were. At that point, he, again, sent a letter to Hussein (a.s.), in which he described a favorable picture of his position and the conditions in Kufa, urging Hussein(a.s.) to come.

People continued flooding in to announce their loyalty to Muslim. Soon, that wave of devotion turned into a storm of potent political change that threatened the central government. This was no secret to Yazid and his governor in Kufa, al-Nu'man bin Bashir. Al-Nu'man attempted to defuse the situation peacefully and stem the wave of support for Muslim but in vain.

The policy adopted by al-Nu'man did not appeal to the agents of the government. They feared the rapid change of events would ultimately endanger the social, economic and political privileges they were enjoying at the expense of the masses. Hence one of the allies of the Umayyads, Abdullah bin Muslim, reported to Yazid the critical situation and dangerous turn of events. He advised him to depose al-Nu'man, whom he described as weak and compromising. In his stead, he suggested a terrorist element had to be sent to Kufa who could put the situation under control, by forcefully crushing popular will. Similar reports were dispatched to

Yazid by various agents of the Umayyads, such as Amarah bin Aqaba and Umar bin Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas.

The first report read in part:

"Muslim bin Aqeel has come to Kufa, and the Shi'a have pledged allegiance to him on behalf of Hussein bin Ali bin Abi-Talib(a.s.). If you have any need for Kufa, then send to it a strong man, who will carry out your orders and act in the same way as you would against your enemy. Regrettably, al-Nu'man is a weak man, or he is acting like a weak man".[78]

Kufa was seething with fast-paced events and was a stage on which two currents were furiously fighting each other: The supporters of the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and those of the Umayyads. The situation was at the point of imminent explosion. Yazid had reached the brink of being toppled, only to be rescued by certain factors that tipped the scale in his favour.

Messengers hurried from Kufa to Hussein(a.s.) and Yazid, urging each of them to act firmly and quickly. The couriers who hastened to Yazid forewarned him that an enormous storm was gathering momentum in Kufa. In the face of such a great storm al-Nu'man could not resist, so something urgent had to be done.

Yazid grasped the scope of the danger in Kufa. He initiated a search for someone who was qualified to deal ruthlessly and brutishly with the Kufans. This person had to be one who loved authority and would cling to it at any cost. He should, above all, be inimical to the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and resolutely loyal to the Umayyads. After lengthy consultations, he could find no one better than Ubaidullah bin Ziyad, who was the governor of Basrah at the time.

Yazid jumped at this opportunity, relying on the advice of Sarjon, his retainer, who told him Mu'awiyah had before his death appointed Ubaidullah bin Ziyad as the governor of Kufa[79] and that he still had the decree in his possession.

It was time the decree was put into effect, as there was no man, in the entirety of the state, who could match him in his loyalty to the Umayyad throne.

Yazid accepted this suggestion at once and ordered Ubaidullah to take control of the admininstration of Kufa and treat the populace violently and savagely. He was not to hesitate even if it was necessary to shed blood, so as to uproot the opposition and defuse the revolutionary current in Kufa.

Yazid's letter read in part:

"My followers among the people of Kufa have informed me that ibn Aqeel is there gathering units in order to create division among the Muslims. Therefore, when you read this letter of mine, go to Kufa and search for ibn Aqeel as if you were looking for a bead, until you find him. Then, bind him in chains, kill him, or expel him. Wassalam".[80]

DESPAIR

Ubaidullah bin Ziyad received Yazid's letter and on the following day, hurriedly set out for Kufa, where the people were waiting for Hussein, and readying to receive him. Paradoxically, the majority of them had never seen Hussein (a.s.) in person. Ubaidullah bin Ziyad took advantage of this and entered the city disguising himself. He had a black turban on his head and covered his face with a veil. Thus was he initially received enthusiastically by the Kufans, when moving through the streets of the city on his arrival. He was greeted everywhere:

"Welcome, son of the Apostle of Allah, your arrival is a blessed event".[81]

Most annoyed at what he had heard, he went toward the governor's palace. What he had already witnessed was more than sufficient evidence of how the people were longing to meet Hussein (a.s.) on the one hand, and their hatred of Yazid and his power on the other. His escort Muslim bin Amru Al-Bahili tried to take the people by surprise and shock them, sowing the seeds of fright into their hearts, so he cried: "Make room, this is the governor, Ubaidullah bin Ziyad".[82]

Ubaidullah continued towards the governor's mansion, surrounded by crowds of people, who were entirely deceived by him, still mistaking him for Hussein (a.s.). Al-Nu'man, meanwhile, was trembling in his palace. He went to the bal-

cony and called down to Ubaidullah, thinking him to be Hussein (a.s.) as the people thought: "I invoke Allah before you, unless you withdraw from me. By Allah, I will not hand over my office to you and I have no wish to fight you".[83]

Ibn Ziyad kept his lips tightly-closed. He was drawing close to the door of the palace, while al-Nu'man was still apprehensively examining the newcomer. Upon realising that it was none other than Ibn Ziyad, he opened the gate for him. Ibn Ziyad entered and passed the night there. Kufa, was awaiting a tremendous turn of events.

On the following day, Ibn Ziyad called on the people from the governor's residence gather for the congregational prayer. He addressed the crowds, promising the obedient abundant rewards and threatening the opponents and dissidents with severe punishment. He then said: "I will use the whip and the sword against those who abandon my commands and oppose my appointment".[84]

Then he delegated agents to spy and report to him the names of the opposition activists. He warned there would be dire consequences for those who disobeyed, including suspension of state allotments of money and rewards. He said in this respect:

"Whoever of you reports to us on the dissidents he will be free from harm. But those of you who do not cooperate will have to guarantee that there is no opponent in his group who may oppose us and no wrongdoer who will try to wrong us. Anyone who does not do so, will be denied protection and his blood and property will be lawful for us to take. Any leader in whose group is a partisan for Hussein (a.s.), who has not been reported to us, will be crucified at the door of his house and I will abolish the stipend of that group".[85]

That was the point at which events took another turn. Despair and frustration appeared to have penetrated the souls of the masses of Kufa and its leaders. Ubaidullah bin Ziyad was busily asserting his authority, by brandishing a

club in the face of the citizenry. He resorted to bribery, oppression, establishing a network of spies to gather information, fabricating and spreading rumours and propagandizing on behalf of Yazid. These were the means by which the Umayyad dictators solidified their power.

Muslim bin Aqeel's position began to founder. He was thus forced to adopt a different mode of action. In line with this, he moved from the house of al-Mukhtar bin Ubaidah al-Thaqafi to the house of the prominent Kufan leader, Hani bin Urwah, who was one of the staunch loyalists of the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.). He went into hiding there, outside the reach of the agents of the governor. But unfortunately, the network of agents discovered his hiding place. Meanwhile, Hani bin Urwah was calmly summoned to the palace. A delegation called on him at his house and informed him that Ubaidullah desired to mend fences between them. He hardly stepped into the palace when he found himself standing before a court levelling charges against him.

There were several spies who testified that he was supporting Hussein (a.s.) and mobilising people on his behalf. He was accused of organizing the opposition and collecting the needed money, men and arms. Apart from planning to topple the regime, he was charged with concealing Muslim bin Aqeel in his house. He tried to defend himself, but was taken by surprise when Ubaidullah bin Ziyad attacked him with a cane, breaking his nose and causing heavy bleeding. Hani could not defend himself in the palace of his enemy. Eventually he was taken to one of the rooms therein and held under tight watch.

Mithhaj (the tribe of Hani) heard of the incident and they moved to defend him, besieging the palace. Ibn Ziyad resorted to deception. He sent the judge Shurayh to calm them down, by informing them that Hani was safe. He did so and the crowds dispersed.

Kufa was now caught in a violent, bloody and armed

struggle between the two sides. News of these developments spread from mouth to mouth. Rumours were rife about the coming of a great army from Syria for the purpose of propping up the governor, crushing the opposition and punishing Muslim bin Aqeel and his followers. The calculated result was that weakness and defeatism crept into the ranks of the revolutionaries and fatally sidetracked the opposition movement.

Muslim bin Aqeel, in the meantime, adopted a policy of wait-and-see. He decided on attacking the governor's palace, taking it by force and toppling the government of Ubaidullah bin Ziyad. He gathered his men and supporters who had given him their pledge of allegiance and fixed as his battle-cry: "O victorious! kill",(86) and attacked the palace(87). His force was, at the beginning, far more superior numerically. Thus Ibn Ziyad and his followers took refuge in the palace, bolting its doors. From there he started infiltrating his agents among the people, spreading rumours and pretending to be faithful to them. The governor's men enjoined them to keep calm and to avoid bloodshed, warning them that there was an enormous army on its way to Kufa from Syria. Umayyad officialdom was playing for time and seeking to create divisions among Muslim's followers. The people consequently began to abandon Muslim(88). When night fell, there were only ten persons left around him. They entered the mosque to offer the prayer. At the outset they were estimated at about 4,000 fighters. Muslim ended his prayer. When he turned back, he found none to show him the way, or provide lodging for him in the city. Muslim eventually found himself alone in the mosque of Kufa. He did not know where to go, nor did he know anyone to ask for help.

That was, needless to say, a highly critical and vulnerable situation, demanding strong will and an unusual capability to cope with the circumstances. Muslim, with undaunted resolve, determined to continue on the path he had chosen as

the representative of Imam Hussein (a.s.) He walked through the streets of Kufa seeking a way out of his dilemma, or finding the way out of the city before being arrested. Now he was thinking of Hussein (a.s.). If only he could reach him and inform him of the latest events and prevent him from coming to Kufa.

The streets and alleys of the city appeared virtually abandoned. Terror loomed there. Agents were in pursuit of the deputy of Hussein (a.s.).. He finally came to a house, at the threshold of which an old woman was standing. She was called Taw'ah. That name was to be perpetually mentioned by history. He stood there, at a loss and embarrassed. He asked for water. She brought him water. After satisfying his thirst he sat on the doorstep, engrossed in thought.

His appearance, the signs of his being a stranger and his sitting there stirred her curiosity. So she asked him whether he had not taken water. In reply, he said he was a homeless stranger and had no acquaintances, then added introducing himself:

"I am Muslim bin Aqeel, the ambassador of Hussein, his messenger to Kufa and his cousin".

She allowed him to enter her house. He passed the night there in hiding, waiting for the following day.

Ibn Ziyad, in the meantime, was informed of the fate of the resistance led by Muslim. Now he was preparing to deliver his blow . He ordered his *mu'athin* (the caller to prayer) to announce:

"There will be no guarantees of security for any man of the police, the group leaders, the supporters and the fighters who prayed the night prayer anywhere except in the mosque".[89]

Out of fear, numerous groups of people began to flood the sanctuary till it was completely filled. Ibn Ziyad led them in the night prayer. He then mounted the pulpit and began to warn the people by threatening them. In his speech he

attacked Muslim bitterly. He said:

"Ibn Aqeel, that stupid and ignorant man has attempted the opposition and rebellion which you have seen. There will be no security from Allah for the man in whose house we find him. Whoever surrenders him will have the reward for his blood. Fear Allah, you servants of Allah and keep to obedience and your pledge of allegiance. Do not do anything which will work against yourselves.

"O Hossyn bin Numayr[90], your mother will lose you, if any of the gates of the lanes of Kufa are open or this man gets away and you do not bring him to me. I give you the authority over the house of the inhabitants of Kufa. Send lookouts to inspect people on the roads. Tomorrow morning clear out the people from their houses and search them thoroughly so that you bring this man to me". [91]

Thus Ibn Ziyad gave his orders for the houses to be completely searched in quest of Muslim, who was, then, in hiding at the house of the woman mujahid Taw'ah, waiting for a chance to flee, or make contact wih someone who would lend him help.

As fate would have it a son of Taw'a's knew of Muslim's hiding place and out of fear and hope for reward, hastened to Ibn Ziyad. Subsequently a detachment of 70 soldiers arrived and laid siege to the house.

Muslim distinctly heard the clatter of the horses' hooves and the voices of the men. He prepared himself to face them. The soldiers broke into the house but Muslim did not surrender. He fought bravely and charged at them fearlessly. They were taken aback by the boldness of his attack, and retreated out of the house.

The men, then, in order to tire him, resorted to a new tactic. They began to throw fire and stones from the surrounding rooftops. He had no choice but to leave the building. Outside, in the alley, he fought ferociously. Eventually, he was seriously injured and his face and body were covered with

wounds and blood. They called out, "You are granted security. Do not destroy yourself" Muslim accepted their offer. He went with them on a mule to the governor's palace. But they had already broken their promise to him when they stripped him of his sword. Finally he was brought in front of Ibn Ziyad. Muslim did not greet him with the respect due a governor. In the presence of the tyrant, Muslim never felt fear. On the contrary he was, as he always had been, strong-willed and defiant. The two exchanged angry words, ended by Ibn Ziyad saying indignantly: "You are going to be killed"

"Then, allow me to make my will", replied Muslim. He chose Umar bin Sa'd to write out his will, due to the kinship between them.

Muslim raised three points in that document.[92] In a corner, near Ibn Ziyad, Muslim finished his will but Ibn Sa'd joined Ibn Ziyad, and began to divulge the contents of the will and to mock at it. Ibn Ziyad resumed his attack of curses and cheap accusations against Muslim. Muslim, on his part continued to retort boldly and fearlessly.

He was given guarantees of security but these were not kept. Ibn Ziyad could not leave Muslim alive, because Muslim was the one who had come to Kufa to challenge his authority and now the opportunity came to avenge himself against him.

Ibn Ziyad thundered orders to his bodyguards to take Muslim to the roof of the palace. "Take the sword" Ibn Ziyad said to Bakr bin Hamran, whom Muslim had seriously wounded, "and behead him. Then throw his body and his head down." Muslim was, subsequently, taken to the roof of the palace, while repeating "Allah is the greatest," to attain martyrdom in high spirits and contentment.

The sword came down to sever the head from his kneeling body.[93] Muslim thus joined the great caravan of martyrs, believers, prophets and the righteous. Then came the turn of

Hani bin Urwah, who was taken, chained, to *Sooq al-Ghanam* (The Sheep's Market) and decapitated. The heads of Muslim and Hani were dispatched to Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah.

As for the bodies, they were tied with ropes and dragged through the streets and bazaars of Kufa. That was the bitter end of the first round of the uprising, that ultimately would turn into a huge volcano, destined to sweep from history the thrones that were erected on the skulls of the callers to faith and the revolutionaries.

To Karbala'

TO KARBALA'

Muslim had been immersed in gathering supporters and taking the pledge of allegiance from the Kufans on behalf of Hussein(a.s.). At Kufa he had been rigorously explaining the objectives of the Husseini movement and setting forth the motives behind the uprising.The masses of Kufa, its leaders and outstanding citizens, intially were enthusiastically declaring their support for the great leader Imam Hussein bin Ali(a.s.) Declarations of help were continuously conveyed to him. That was why Muslim finally became convinced that the situation was ripe to begin the uprising and with that conclusion in mind, he had written to Imam Hussein, urging him to come to Kufa.

Hussein bin Ali(a.s.), thus received Muslim's letter in which there was a clear description of the political circumstances in Kufa, and encouraging news regarding public opinion. Upon reading the letter, he settled on heading towards Kufa from Makkah, to begin from there leading the people against the tyranny of Yazid. Hussein(a.s.) decided to leave. He gathered his womenfolk, children, sons, his brother's sons, his uncle's sons and readied to begin his long journey.

Soon, the news of his impending departure spread and the hearts of the people hovered over Hussein(a.s.), clinging to him, seeking to persuade him not to leave. They were all afraid that He might not return to them. One after the other,

the people began to call on Hussein (a.s.), requesting him to change his decision.

He, however, refused any offer of conciliation with Yazid and declined all advice urging him to sit at his home. With Islam endangered, what good was his sitting? Was there any alternative apart from revolt? Decidedly not. Yazid, on the other hand, would not make a truce with a man true to his principles like Hussein(a.s.). The ummah that looked to Hussein(a.s.) as its sole leader and saviour, would lose trust in him if he made peace with Yazid. The Muslims would resort to submission and the majority of them would see in the peace a recognition of the legality of Yazid's government. Hussein was, therefore, the standard according to which the ummah could judge the regime's legitimacy.

Hussein's decision to leave was irrevocable. For this reason, he subtly refused to accept the suggestions of Umar bin Abdûl-Rahman bin al-Harith bin Husham, Muhammad bin al-Hanafiyyah, his brother, Abdullah bin Ja'far, his cousin and Abdullah bin Abbas. He even refused a guarantee of security from Amru bin Sa'id bin al-Aas, Yazid's governor of Makkah offered to him through Ja'far al-Tayyar. He informed him openly that there was a secret and a great objective behind his decision, which he could not reveal.

Imam Hussein said to Abdullah,

"I had a dream. I saw the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.). He ordered me to do something, only I am entitled to carry it out".

"What is that dream about?", asked Abdullah.

Hussein(a.s.) replied,

"I will not divulge it or confide it to anyone, till I meet Allah". (94)

There was certainly a great secret and a truth behind his uprising. If we read the dialogue between Hussein(a.s.) and those who attempted to persuade him to stay at Makkah, we will conclude that Hussein(a.s.) had a sublime goal in mind.

He and the others realized from the very beginning that the Kufans would fail him and he would be left on his own. All that was abundantly clear to Hussein(a.s.), but his religious duty urged him to stem the tide of the Umayyads, no matter what the cost was.

Accordingly, he set off on the 8th day of Thul-Hijjah, 60 A.H. heading towards Iraq and this upon receiving the letter of Muslim bin Aqeel in which he exhorted him to travel to Kufa. All those who met him on his journey advised him to return to Makkah. He would reply:

"By Allah, they will not leave me till they tear the very heart from the depths of my chest. When they do that, Allah will give power to someone over them, who will humiliate them. They will be more humiliated than even a woman's menstrual cloth". (95)

He said to Abdullah bin al-Zubayr:

"My father told me that there will be a sheep (96)***, on account of which Makkah will be desecrated. I never desire to be that sheep".*** (97)

Then Hussein(a.s.) added:

"By Allah, should I be killed a span's distance away from Makkah, that would be more desirable for me than being killed in it. And should I be killed two spans' distance away from it that would be more desirable for me than being killed a span's distance from it. By Allah, even if I go into hiding in an insect's hole, they will flush me out to kill me". (98)

Everything was thus clear for Hussein. He was quite sure that only through martyrdom could he achieve his great objective and that the uprising was an unavoidable historical necessity.

Those who voiced objections to Hussein's decision took into account two key points:

1. They were afraid lest the Muslim ummah lose its righteous leadership. The stage would be Yazid's to do whatever

he desired with the ummah and its wealth. This point was obvious in Abdullah bin Muti's statement to Hussein(a.s.), when he camped in their quarter on his way to Kufa.

"By Allah, should you be killed, we would be enslaved after you."[99]

2. They considered victory only in terms of assuming power, after crushing the enemy's military forces. In contrast, Hussein(a.s.) deemed victory the success in putting the ummah on the right path and perseverance in doing so. Once the path was made clear for the ummah, it would know how to challenge the unjust ruler and that would be a source of a great power latent in the conscience of the ummah. That force had blood, martyrdom and holy sacrifice as their base.

The people thought the existence of Imam Hussein(a.s.) among them was an historic necessity, while Imam Hussein regarded sacrifice and martyrdom an historically inevitable necessity.

The people took the view that Hussein(a.s.) was incapable militarily of pulling down the regime, so he had to leave the military choice. Hussein was of the view that lacking military force could be compensated by his holy blood. As a result, his voice would echo forever, and the particles of the sand that were soaked with his blood would be an army fighting oppresion forever ...that is why he moved eagerly to meet his fate as the lord of the martyrs.

Hussein set off on the 8th of Thil-Hijjah. The governor of Hijaz, Amru bin Sa'id bin al-Aas heard of that, so he sent a group of his men to block his way. But he faced them violently and the two side exchanged blows of whips and as a result, Ibn al-Aas withdrew.

At al-Tan'im, on the way to Kufa, they saw camels heading towards Syria, carrying gifts to Yazid bin Mu'awiyah. They were coming from Yemen. Hussein(a.s.) confiscated them as booty of war. Hussein by then, was at war with Yazid. He was most kind with the owners of the camels and

gave them an amount of money for their camels. He asked them to join him and some of them accepted the offer, while the rest resumed their journey.

At al-Saffah, another stage on the route to Kufa, he met the well-known poet al-Farazdaq. Hussein(a.s.) asked him to tell him of the general situation of Kufa, to which al-Farazdaq replied:

"The hearts of the people are with you but their swords are against you. The decision comes from Heaven and Allah does what he wishes".

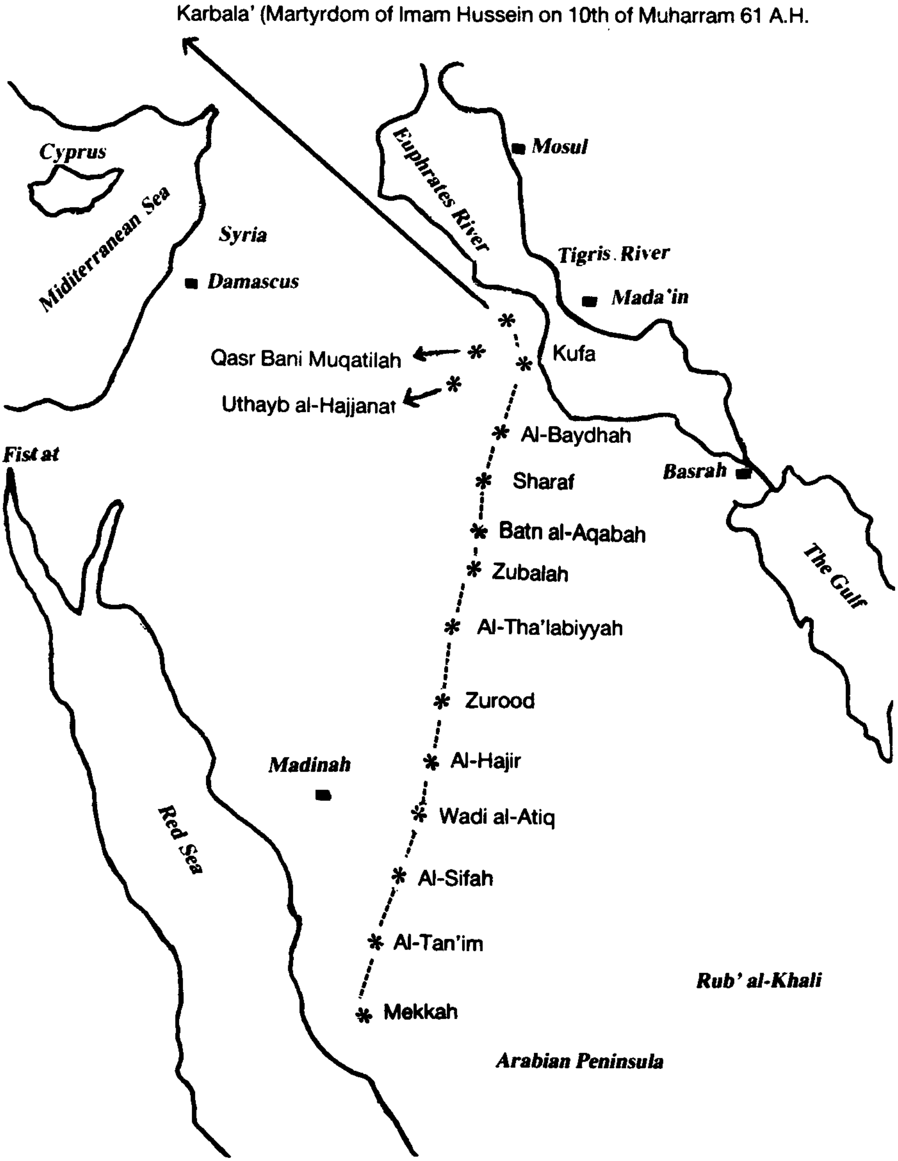
Imam Hussein(a.s.) said:

"You have spoken truly of the affair belonging to Allah. Every moment He is in a state of glory. If fate sends down what we like, we praise Allah for His blessings. He is the One from Whom help should be sought. However, although fate may frustrate our hopes, yet, it does not destroy the souls of those whose intention is the truth and whose hearts are pious". [100]

The news of Hussein's decision spread among the people. The regime was most worried lest he succeed in toppling the throne of Yazid. The people of Hijaz and Iraq began to stir on the route leading to the revolt. On the way to Kufa, at every point a group of people would join Hussein (a.s.). Ubaidullah bin Ziyad was made aware of the beginning of Hussein's movements. He, on his part, gathered his men and devised a plan to block the way to Kufa. He sent his chief of security, Hossyn bin Numayr at the head of a military force to carry out his plan. Ibn Numayr chose a strategically important point that commanded Hussein's route. He camped at al-Qadisiyah and made it his base. His troops took up position between al- Qadisiyah to Khaffan and Qatqatanah to the mountain of La'la'.

In the meantime, Hussein(a.s.) was approaching al-Hajir, from where he wrote a letter to the Kufans urging them to stand fast and informing them of his arrival.

Map showing the place Hussein's caravan passed on the way from Makkah to Karbala'. Quoted from: Abdul-Karim al-Qazwini *Al-Watha'iq al-Rasmiyyah li-Thawrat al-Imam al-Husayn.*



He (a.s.) folded this letter and handed it to Qays bin Musahhir al- Saydawi, who set off for Kufa. Unfortunately, he could not penetrate the lines of troops positioned outside Kufa. He was captured and carried before Ubaidullah bin Yazid. Qays never wavered and defiantly stood in front of Ibn Ziyad, who ordered him to curse Hussein(a.s.) from the pulpit. He thereupon took the pulpit, violently attacked Ubaidullah and urged the people to support Hussein(a.s.). Ubaidullah was, by then, furiously angry. He ordered his bodyguards to take him to the top of the palace and throw him down. They did so. Qays was propelled to the ground and thus attained martyrdom.

At Kufa, Ubaidullah moved swiftly to crush the lingering seeds of opposition. Through bribes, spies and terror he continued to weaken the movement. Muslim bin Aqeel and Hani bin Urwah were already killed while al-Mukhtar bin Ubaidah al-Thaqafi languished in prison.

Hussein(a.s.) was unaware of the latest developments and therefore dispatched Abdullah bin Yaqtar[101] to Muslim bin Aqeel. At a place known as al-Tha'labiyyah Hussein(a.s.) was finally informed of the breakdown of the uprising and the martyrdom of Muslim bin Aqeel[102]. His messenger, Abdullah bin Yaqtar, was captured by Ibn Numayr's soldiers and then transferred to Kufa to face Ubaidullah bin Ziyad.

Ibn Yaqtar was, as his predecesser, a paradigm of courage and bravery. He, likewise, was ordered to curse Hussein(a.s.) from the pulpit. And in the same way he cursed Ubaidullah bin Ziyad and exhorted the people to get ready to support Hussein(a.s.). Upstaged by Abdullah's steadfastness, Ubaidullah ordered him to be thrown down from the highest peak of the palace roof. Upon surviving that, one of the bodyguard of Ubaidullah, hastened to behead him.

It was at Zubalah that Hussein(a.s.) heard of the arrest and subsequent murder of his messenger and then the news

of the failure of the uprising. He was then sure that those who called him to come to Kufa and had given him a pledge of fealty had broken their vows and failed him. There was an urgent need to convey the latest turn of events to his companions. He addressed them openly and set the facts in front of them so they could decide for themselves:

> ***"Our Shi'a have deserted us. Those of you who prefer to leave us, may do so freely and without guilt. They dispersed from him right and left, until there were only left with him those who had come with him from Makkah".***[103]

Hussein(a.s.) passed that night at Zubalah, thinking of Muslim, Hani and Abdullah bin Yaqtar, pondering over the future of the ummah. At daybreak, the caravan resumed the journey. They passed by Batn al-Aqabah and moved all day till they reached a place called Sharaf at sunset. Hussein(a.s.) and his companions camped there for the night, being thoroughly exhausted and in need of rest.

On the following day, they started at dawn. The sun was climbing in the sky and the heat was unbearable. Around midday, one of the troops saw black spots and shades. At first he thought them to be palm-tree orchards. He cried loudly, "Allah is the greatest". Hussein(a.s.) replied with the same sentence and asked him: ***"Why did you say 'Allah is the greatest'?"*** "I saw palm trees", the man replied. The man presumed that they had arrived in Iraq. What Hussein's companion saw were not palm trees, nor Iraq's orchards, but military forces on the move. They were soldiers, horses, spears, banners and the dust rising from the horses' hooves. "In this area, there is not a single palm tree", his companions wondered aloud. ***"What do you see then?"*** Hussein inquired "By Allah we see the ears of horses"[104], they told him. ***"By Allah, I can see that too"***, agreed Hussein(a.s.).

Hussein(a.s.) and his group behold with surprised a huge army, travelling into their direction from al-Qadisiyah. Hussein questioned his men:

"Is there any place we can put at our rear, so that we face them in only one direction?". They pointed out the mountain of *Thu-Hasm* as a suitable place. The group headed towards the mountain, which was on their left. The enemy army, composed of about 1,000 horsemen, led by Hur bin Yazid al-Riyahi was persistently moving towards them. Hur gave the orders to surround Hussein (a.s.) and his followers. In the meantime, he was vying with the smaller band to occupy the strategic mountain position but Hussein(a.s.) reached the place before him and camped there.

It was midday and extremely hot. The sand was burning, the horses panting with thirst, while the men were tired and parched. In spite of all this, Hur commanded them to lay siege to Hussein(a.s.) and his followers. Hussein(a.s.), to the contrary, treated them kindly, in a way reminiscent of his grandfather, the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) and how he had treated the people of Makkah when the city fell into his hands.

Hussein ordered his followers to provide them and their horses with water. He even went to the extent of carrying water to the dry-throats among the army of al-Hur. Both man and beast quenched their thirst. It was, by then, time for the noon prayer. Hussein(a.s.) commanded al-Hajjaj bin Masrooq to call for the prayer and delivered a speech to both camps, explaining to Hur and his men his overall attitude and final objective. Then he called on them to adhere to their promises and testaments as these were the people of Iraq. He reminded them of their letters and the tens of messengers they had dispatched to him. During his speech Hur's men kept silent.

Hussein(a.s.) led both camps in prayer. When the prayer was over, both sides remained in their positions. Before performing his afternoon prayer, Hussein made another speech. Before them he emptied two saddlebags full of letters and documents sent to him from Iraq. He then ordered his fol-

lowers to depart, but Hur would not allow them to leave. After a long talk between them, Hur said: "I have been ordered to bring you to Kufa".

Following further discussions Hur agreed that Hussein(a.s.) would take a route not leading to Kufa, nor returning him to Madinah. Hussein(a.s.) left with the Umayyad army, keeping close watch over him and his contingent. Hur threatened Hussein(a.s.) with death but his reply was:

"Do you think you can frighten me with death? Could a worse disaster befall you than killing me? I can only say to you what the brother of al-Aws said to his cousin when he wanted to help the Apostle of Allah((s.a.w.). His cousin feared for him and said: 'Where are you going, you will be killed' but he replied: I will depart for there is no shame for a young man whenever he intends to do what is right and fight like a Muslim. He who soothes righteous men through the sacrifice of his life, has parted with the cursed and opposed the criminal. If I live, I will not regret what I have done, and if I die, I will not be blamed. Let it be enough for you to live in humiliation and be reviled'". (105)

Hur became agitated and drew away from Hussein(a.s.), who travelled till he reached *Uthaib al-Hajjanat*, then *Qasr bani Muqatil* where he camped. Late at night, he directed his men to provide themselves with water and make ready to depart. Upon mounting his horse and as a consequence of fatigue, he dozed off. He then woke up saying:

"We belong to Allah and to Him we will return. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds".

He did that two or three times, whereupon his son Ali bin al-Hussein(a.s.) approached him and asked:

"Why are you praising Allah and repeating the verse of returning to him?"

"My son," he answered,

"I nodded off and a mounted horseman appeared to me and said:

'Men are travelling and death travels towards them'. Then I knew it was our own souls announcing our deaths to us."

"Father", asked Ali,

"May Allah never show you evil, are we not in the right?"

"Indeed we are", he answered, ***"By Him to Whom all His servants must return".***

"Father", said Ali, ***"then we need have no concern if we are going to die righteously."***

"May Allah give you the best reward a son can get for his behaviour towards his father", answered Hussein.[106]

After offering his dawn prayer, Hussein travelled away from the direction of Kufa, keeping to the left, till eventually he arrived at Naynawa. At Naynawa, which was a small village, events took a sudden and vicious turn. Hussein(a.s.) and Hur were both surprised when a letter arrived from Ubaidullah bin Ziyad. It was a strongly worded letter carrying the bad news of something destructive to come.

The missive read in part:

"When this letter of mine arrives and my messenger comes to you, force Hussein(a.s.) to a halt. But only let him stop in an open place, without vegetation or water. I have ordered my messenger to stay with you and not take your leave until he brings the news of your carrying out my instructions. Wassalam".[107]

Hur read the letter slowly and carefully, then he approached Hussein(a.s.) and reread the letter for him. Hussein(a.s.) responded: "Then let us stop at Naynawa, al-Ghadhiriyyah or Shufayyah". Hur refused that demand, on the pretext that he feared the spies in his army. Zuhayr bin al-Qayn[108] then suggested that Hussein(a.s.) head for a nearly place called *al-Aqr*, but Hussein refused that. He persisted on travelling.

Before departing, he once again addressed his followers:

"No doubt you are aware of the gravity of the situation which you are witnessing yourselves here and now. Life has certainly

changed disguises and its good has gone for ever. This has continued till the remaining good in it amounts to the thin sediment at the bottom of a drinking utensil. Life is a mean food, like a pasture covered with bad grass. Do you not see that the truth is not followed and falsehood not discouraged? The faithful must certainly desire to meet his Lord righteously. I do not deem death other than martyrdom and life among the unjust other than suffering and boredom".[109].

THE PROMISED LAND

It was not long before the Umayyad army blocked the march of Imam Hussein(a.s.) and his followers. Hussein(a.s.) thereupon asked the name of the location:

***"What is this place called?"**,* he questioned.

"The land of Taf", they told him.

"Is there another name by which it is known?", he asked again.

"It is called Karbala'", they told him.

"Lord, I fly for refuge from affliction (karb) and calamity (bala')," he said and then added: ***"this is a place of affliction and calamity. Dismount, for here is the end of our journey, the place where our blood will be shed, the place of our graves. That is what my grandfather had told me."***[110]

It was Thursday, the 2nd of Muharram 61 A.H.[111] Hussein and his companions dismounted and camped there (i.e. the land of sacrifice).

The Imam erected his tent and sat preparing his sword while repeating:

"Time, shame on you as a friend! How many ups and downs do you possess? How many a companion or a seeker will be dead! Time will not be satisfied with any substitute. Every living creature will have to journey along my path. How near it is to departure. Surely the matter rests with the Mighty One".[112]

Hussein(a.s.) was repeating that, while Zaynab, his sister

and the standard-bearer who would afterwards carry his revolutionary message, was listening to him sadly attentive. She called out, in a frightened and passionate tone:

"This is what one who is sure of his approaching death would say".

"Indeed, sister", said he. ***"O for your bereavement"***, she lamented, ***"Hussein(a.s.) is telling me about his death."*** (113)

Ubaidullah meanwhile rushed reinforcements to the area. One of the men he ordered against Hussein(a.s.) was Umar bin Sa'd, who, at first, asked to be relieved of the heavy task. He later yielded to Ubaidullah's desire when the latter threatened to deprive him of the governorship of al-Ray. Umar had been struggling with two questions: Submission to the life of this world or refusing worldly temptations and refraining from warring with Hussein (a.s.). Finally the first equation triumphed and he decided to take part in the battle against him.

He expressed that struggle in two lines of verse:

"Could I decline the governorship of al-Ray, while it is my dream, or should I return blamed for killing Hussein? Should I kill him, then I wind up in the fire, which has no veil, while the governorship of al-Ray is the refreshment of my eye". (114)

He decided to carry out that task and advanced to Naynawa at the head of an army of about 4,000 soldiers. Upon his arrival, Umar bin Sa'd surrounded Hussein's camp. Hussein(a.s.) began negotiations with him, and they had several meetings. As a result, he wrote to Ubaidullah bin Ziyad suggesting lifting the siege of Hussein's camp and allowing him to return from where he had come, thus halting the impending shedding of blood. The suggestion, in fact, was discussed between him and Hussein (a.s.) and both of them accepted it.

Ubaidullah received the letter. Even he, at first

appreciated the idea and wanted to put it into effect. But then, al-Shimr bin Thil-Jawshan- one of the blood enemies of Hussein(a.s.), warned him of the consequences. He told him that once Hussein (a.s.) escaped the siege he would become too strong and the military scales would eventually tip in his favour. Thus it was necessary to take advantage of the situation and force Hussein (a.s.) to give the oath of fealty and yield to his will. That evil suggestion was the plan that changed the course of events, and brought the tragedy about.

Thus are many historically important events initiated with a marginal attitude. The suggestion of al-Shimr falls into this category. It led to the martyrdom of Hussein(a.s.), created a series of afflictions for the ummah and ended in the collapse of the Umayyad state.

Ubaidullah accepted the suggestion of al-Shimr and handed him a threatening letter to be delivered to Umar bin Sa'd. The letter read in part:

"I did not send you to Hussein to refrain from fighting him; to idle the time away with him; to promise him peace and preservation of his life; to make excuses for him; nor to be an intercessor on his behalf with me. Therefore, see to it that if Hussein and his followers submit to my authority and surrender, you send them to me in peace. If they refuse, then march against them to fight them and to punish them; for they deserve that. If Hussein is killed, make the horses trample on his body; both front and back; for he is a disobedient rebel and I do not consider that this will be in any way wrong after death. It is my view that should you do this to him, if you carry out our command concerning him, we will give you the reward due to one who is attentive and obedient. If you refuse, then give up our cause and withdraw from our army, and leave it to Shimr bin Thil- Jawshan. We have given him our authority. Wassalam".[115]

Shimr took the letter and hastened into ignominy. Umar bin Sa'd received him, read the letter and those two trends

within returned to struggle with each other. If he killed Hussein, he would then win a high position among his bosses. If he did not, however, he would be out of favour.

On the 7th of the month of Muharram, Umar bin Sa'd moved his forces alongside the Tigris to block Hussein's path to the water, so as to make them die either from thirst, or force them to surrender. For Ibn Sa'd that was not enough. He organized his army and began to draw slowly near Hussein(a.s.) and his followers. That was on Thursday, the 9th of Muharram. The soldiers began to brandish their swords and spears.

Hussein(a.s.) was at the time, sitting in front of his tent, looking at the sand of al-Taf, and thinking over the critical situation. He was pondering the consequence of the coming battle and the sadness and revolutionary awareness that it would nurture in the depths of freedom- lovers.

Hussein(a.s.) did not know of Umar bin Sa'd's decision. His sister, Zainab, the heroine of Karbala', suddenly called out:

"Don't you hear the sounds which are getting nearer?".

No sooner did Zainab say that than al-Abbas bin Ali(a.s.) came to Hussein(a.s.) shouting:

"O brother, the enemy has come..."

Hussein(a.s.) rose to his feet and considered it necessary to first talk to the Umayyad army and understand exactly what they thought of the situation. He asked his brother al-Abbas to address them before he did so.

The commanders of the army were blinded beyond limits by the rewards they had been promised by Ubaidullah. That was why they competed with each other to fight Hussein(a.s.) and shed his blood. Their unanimous reply was: "Let Hussein submit to the governor's authority, otherwise we will fight him".

Al-Abbas(a.s) conveyed the decision of the Umayyad military commander to his brother Hussein(a.s.).There was no

alternative except war. Hussein(a.s.) could under no circumstances surrender to Ibn Ziyad:

"One like me can never give a pledge of allegiance to Yazid".

He continued,

"I do not wish a death for myself other than martyrdom, while life among the unjust would be unbearable".

He reiterated the words he took from the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.), which he conveyed to the Umayyad army at *al-Baydha* a few days earlier. He told them:

"O people, the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) had said: 'Whoever witnesses an unjust ruler considering the prohibitions of Allah the Almighty as permissible, breaking the covenant of Allah, opposing the practices of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.), treating his servants sinfully and cruelly and had seen all these misdeeds but did not oppose him by words or actions, Allah surely will punish him as he wills'".[116]

Yazid, who usurped the caliphate unjustly, was exactly the type of ruler the Prophet (s.a.w.) referred to. So what choice did Hussein have except fighting?

He sent al-Abbas to ask Ibn Said to give them a delay for the night, to think the matter over. The following day he would make a final decision. Al-Abbas asked Ibn Sa'd for the period of grace and after discussing it with his commanders, Umar bin Sa'd agreed to it.

THE LAST NIGHT

It was not to rethink his decision concerning the military choice that Hussein asked Ibn Sa'd to grant him the extra time. The path was crystal clear in his mind, but Hussein(a.s.) eagerly wanted to stay up that night in worship. He desired that it be the last night during which he would talk to his family, companions and loved ones. He knew what lay ahead. Thus he said to his brother al-Abbas, the second time he sent him to Ibn Sa'd:

"Go back to them. If you can delay them until morning and persuade them to keep away from us during the evening, then perhaps we may be able to pray to our Lord during the night, to supplicate Him and seek His forgiveness. He knows that I have always loved prayer, the recitation of his Book, invocating Him at length and seeking His forgiveness". (117)

The situation was extremely dismal. The Umayyad army was surrounding the camp of Hussein(a.s.), while women and children were frightened as to what would happen next. Imam Hussein was checking his defences and worrying about how to keep the women and children out of harm's way.

Shortly before sunset, Imam Hussein(a.s.) addressed his companions and family and told them that the enemy wanted no one except him. Thus, anyone of them was free to withdraw during the night, in order to escape death. Not one of them would leave him. They unanimously declared their

readiness to fight and lay their lives down for the sake of Islam.

Darkness fell. The household of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and their supporters did not close their eyes. Some of them were praying, invocating Allah for His mercy, reciting the Qur'an. Others were preparing wills and saying last words to their families. Voices were like the buzz of the bees. They were preparing themselves to meet their Lord. Swords and spears were being readied. That night they were guests on the land of Karbala'. History awaited the event that would take place on the morn. The swords and spears were pens that would inscribe the most glorious chapter in the continuing drama being written by man.

During that night Hussein bid farewell to his family and loved ones. He paid visits to al-Sajjad, Zainab, Sukainah, Layla, al-Rabab and al-Baqir(a.s.) his nephew. He made his last will, as he decided to water the orchard of Islam with his own blood. They were now alone, in a faraway land, surrounded by an increasing army, as Ubaidullah sent even more armed men. They were besieged by horses, darkness and a huge host. The Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) was at the great distance of Madinah, along with Imam Hassan(a.s.) and his mother al-Zahra'(a.s.). They were two-months' travel by camel from Madinah[118]. As for their father the Commander of the Faithful, Ali(a.s.), he was resting at peace in nearby Najaf.[119]

The last night passed quickly and Friday, the day of Ashura' – that horrific day – finally came. The spears and swords were prepared to mince and mutilate the bodies of Hussein(a.s.) and his companins.

Umar bin Sa'd mobilized his army. He put Amru bin al-Hajjaj at the head of his right flank. Shimr bin Thil-Jawshan was in command of the left wing. Urwah bin Qays[120] was in charge of the cavalry, while Shabath bin Rib'i was leading the foot soldiers. He gave the standard to his retainer Duraid.[121]

Imam Hussein(a.s.) surveyed the huge force confronting him. He never budged, nor did he rethink his position. He was as before, calm and imperturbable. That noble band was as they were described by a poet:

They wore their hearts on their armour and were competing to lay down their lives.

He raised his hands in prayer to Allah, the Exalted:

"O Allah, it is You in Whom I trust amid all grief. You are my hope amid all violence. You are my refuge and provision in everything that happens to me. How many grievances that weaken the heart, leaving me with no means to handle them, during which the friend deserts me and the enemy rejoices in it. I lay it before you and complain of it to you, because of my desire in You. You alone. You relieve me of it and remove it from me. You are the Master of all grace, the Possessor of all goodness and the Ultimate Resort of all desire".(122).

The Everlasting Battle

THE EVERLASTING BATTLE

The enemy began to circle around his tent. Imam Hussein(a.s.) had thrown firewood into the trench they had running along the rear flank of the camp and set it on fire to prevent an attack from that direction.

Shimr looked at the fire burning in the ditch and cried:

"O Hussein, are you hurrying towards the fire of hell before the Day of Resurrection?". ***"You are more worthy to be consumed by it"***, Imam Hussein(a.s.) replied.

Muslim bin Awsajah, a companion of Imam Hussein's(a.s.), wanted to let fly an arrow at him.

"Do not shoot at him," Hussein(a.s.) ordered, ***"for I am unwilling to begin the fighting."***

Such is the Islamic morality concerning war. Even at the most crucial moments, Imam Hussein(a.s.) would not abandon his principles. Ironically, Shimr was the very wretch who would kill Hussein a few hours later.

Imam Hussein(a.s.) placed Zuhayr bin al-Qayn in charge of his right wing and had Habib bin Mudhahir heading his left wing. He and his household were at the centre. He gave the standard to his brother al-Abbas. Imam Hussein(a.s.) commanded only seventy-two fighters.

Before the battle began Imam Hussein(a.s.) made another speech to the enemy forces, in which he reminded them of their letters and their previous vows of obedience to him. He addressed them, trying to stir minds which were

inextricably linked to the earthly temptations of money and power. They did not listen to him, nor were they impressed by his words; all except one person. He was Hur bin Yazid al-Riyahi, whose conscience had awakened. Till that point Hur was one of the Umayyad military commanders. It was he who had kept Imam Hussein(a.s.) under surveillance since he had entered Iraq. Hur now returned to the fold of the righteous and met his martyrdom in front of Imam Hussein(a.s.).

A few of Imam Hussein's companions, like Zuhayr bin al-Qayn and Burayr[123] bin Khudhayr, tried to resort to logic in their speeches to the hostile army in explaining Imam Hussein's motives for coming to them. Nobody would listen to them.

Imam Hussein(a.s.) returned, again riding his horse and stood in front of the Umayyad army putting the Book of Allah over his head. He exhorted them,

"O people let us take the Book of Allah and the practice of my grandfather, the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) to arbitrate between us". [124].

All the ears were as if deaf.

"Don't you see", he added, ***"that I carry the sword of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) and wear his armor of war and his turban?"***

"Indeed, you do", they agreed.

"Then why do you fight me?" he asked.

The response was one of a daft person, the answer of someone who had neither the will nor the liberty to choose, one who could not distinguish between blind obedience and obedience based on logic. "Because we obey the governor Ibn Ziyad", was the retort[125].

Imam Hussein(a.s.) accordingly washed his hands of them and repeated the poetry of Farwah bin Museek:

"Should we defeat our enemy we will go on defeating them. But should we be defeated, it will be one time only. Tell those who rejoice in our affliction: 'Wake up, for you

will end up like us.' When death lifts its grip off the necks of some people, it surely will cling to others'".

He (a.s.) added,

"By Allah, you will not remain on earth longer than the time needed to ride a horse. Then the earth will wheel on you, like a millstone and turn like a pivot. This is certainly what my father had told me, quoting my grandfather the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.). Resolve upon your affair and (gather) your associates. Let not your affair remain dubious to you, then have it executed against me and give me no respite. Surely I rely on Allah my Lord and your Lord; there is no living creature but He holds it by its forelock; surely my Lord is on the right path". (126)

Imam Hussein(a.s.) advised Ibn Sa'd several times not to shed the blood of the Muslims but Ibn Sa'd persisted in wanting to fight. At last Imam Hussein(a.s.) said to him.

"O Umar, will you claim to kill me and that bastard appoint you a governor of al-Ray and Gorgan. By Allah, you are never going to delight in it. It is already foredoomed to nothing. Do what you want to. You will never be happy after my death, neither in this life, nor in the hereafter. I can see your head stuck to a reed thrown among the children of Kufa, who play with it".

At that, Ibn Sa'd angrily turned his face from Imam Hussein(a.s.)(127). Satan had taken hold of him and he ordered the bearer of his standard to bring it forward: "Duraid", he called out, "bring forward your standard for us". He complied and then Umar bin Sa'd put an arrow in his bow and shot it. He said, "All of you be witness that I am the first to shoot". The two sides began to wing arrows at each other and to come forward for single combat.(128)

Ibn Sa'd was thus the one responsible for starting the war, when he directed his arrows towards the camp of the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.). His followers did likewise and there came such a shower of arrows, that no one of the companions of Imam Hussein(a.s.) was left unscathed.

At that point, Imam Hussein(a.s.) said to his companions:

"Prepare yourselves - May Allah have mercy on you in meeting the inescapable death. These arrows are the letters of the people to you". [129]

That the companions of Imam Hussein (a.s.) were few and vastly outnumbered, did not leave any mark on their morale or courage. They never retreated or fell victim to despair but fought bravely with the Umayyad army. A heated battle ensued which lasted for about one hour. When the dust settled there were fifty martyrs from among the companions of Imam Hussein (a.s.).[130] Then some of the followers of Ibn Sa'd came forward for single combat. The companions of Imam Hussein (a.s.) contested with each other to see who would fight their enemies. Habib bin Mudhahir, Burayr, and Abdullah bin Umayr al-Kalbi asked Imam Hussein's permission to fight. Imam Hussein (a.s.) gave his consent to Abdullah bin Umayr.

His wife Umm-Wahab watched him. His left hand was bleeding. The scene excited her and she hoisted a tent pole and went onto the battlefield. Abdullah tried to prevent her, but he failed. Then Imam Hussein (a.s.) called out to her:

"May Allah reward you handsomely on behalf of the household of your Prophet. Return to the tent as fighting is not incumbent on women". [131]

The battle continued at Karbala'. The cascade of exalted blood was flowing, making its way to immortality. The companions of Imam Hussein(a.s.) were falling to the ground, one after the other. Neverthless, they inflicted heavy casulties on the Umayyad army. It was for this reason that Umar bin Sa'd called on his men not to enter single combat with the companions of Imam Hussein(a.s.). Instead, he urged them to make one concerted assault on them, using all their available weapons.

Units of the Umayyad army, led by Amru bin al-Hajjaj, advanced towards the right-wing of Imam Hussein's small army. Those thus besieged, kneeled and directed their spears towards the assailants. That was a militarily successful tactic, as the horses were spooked and retreated. Taking advantage of that, the companions of Imam Hussein(a.s.) shot arrows after their enemies.

The men led by Shimr then attacked but this time they charged the left wing of Imam Hussein's fighters. A ferocious battle ensued, in which Imam Hussein's men finally succeeded in driving the Umayyads back. Shimr was forced to retreat humbly. Abdullah bin Umayr al-Kalbi fought bravely, killing nineteen cavaliers and twelve foot soldiers. He was eventually injured, captured and killed.

Umm-Wahab could not bear the death of her husband and so she went to the battlefield, kneeled beside the body and rubbed the blood and dust of the severed head. Noticing her bravery, Shimr ordered his retainer to kill her. The retainer lifted a metal pole and hit the woman on the head. Her head was then cut off and thrown in the direction of Imam Hussein's camp.

Now the attack intensified. They were almost encircled by the Umayyad army. Some of the soldiers went into the tents looting property. Ibn Sa'd ordered, "Set the tents ablaze". The children cried and the women also wept, as they saw the tents burning.

The sun was now high in the sky. It was midday and impossible for Imam Hussein(a.s.) to forget about prayer. He gathered his companions to pray together[132]. Shortly after the prayer they resumed fighting. One after the other they went to the battlefield without returning: His elder son Ali; his brothers, Ubaidullah, Uthman, Ja'far and Muhammad; the sons of his brother al-Hassan: Abu-Bakr, al-Qasim, al-Hassan II[133]; the son of his sister Zainab, Awn bin Abdullah bin Ja'far al-Tayyar; the household of Aqeel; Abdullah

bin Muslim bin Aqeel, Abdul-Rahman bin Aqeel, Ja'far bin Aqeel, Muhammad bin Muslim bin Aqeel, Abdullah bin Aqeel.

Those matchless heroes from the household of Aqeel and of Ali bin Abi-Talib(a.s.) were now decapitated bodies scattered on the plain of war like the stars on the autumn sky, or lotus petals on the surface of a pond.

Imam Hussein(a.s.) stood there amid them, sure of joining them shortly, but deeply stirred by the cries of the children and lamentations of the women. He looked for a helper. He called out,

"Is there any defender of the womenfolk of the Apostle of Allah? Is there a monotheist who fears Allah and so helps us? Is there any supporter seeking Allah's reward and so aids us?"(134)

There was no answer except the wailing of women and children. Imam Hussein(a.s.) had no option except fighting the enemy. His heart was flooded with fatherly compassion for his baby Abdullah. Certain that he would never return alive from the battlefield, he went to the tent of his sister Zainab, asking her to bring him his baby so as to plant a kiss on his lips and see him for the last time.

His aunt Zainab brought him to his father. Imam Hussein (a.s.) coddled him to kiss his dry lips, but alas an arrow came swiftly from the enemy and thudded into the throat of the infant(135). Surprisingly enough, Imam Hussein(a.s.) stood there amidst his enemies, gathering the blood in his cupped palm throwing it upwards, complaining to Allah:

"I find consolation in the fact that what I am suffering is witnessed by Allah".(136)

Imam Hussein (a.s.) mounted his horse accompanied by his brother Abbas bin Ali and headed towards the Tigris in the hope of bringing water to his entourage. But the Umayyads separated him from his brother the hero, the cavalier and standard-bearer. Imam Hussein (a.s.) now was fighting on his own. Abbas also fought dauntlessly. He killed

a number of the Umayyads but was fatally injured,[137] thereby insuring the Husseini mantle would perpetually be represented on earth. Imam Hussein repeated the phrase:

"O Allah, I complain to You about what is being done to the son of the daughter of Your Prophet". [138]

He looked around and there was no one to help him. His companions were strewn lifeless around him, they had done their duty raising the famous watchword:

"I will depart for there is no shame for a young man, whenever he intends to do what is right and fight like a Muslim. He who soothes righteous men through the sacrifice of his life, has parted with the cursed and opposed the criminal. If I live, I will not regret what I have done, and if I die, I will not be blamed. Let it be enough for you to live in humiliation and be reviled".

Imam Hussein was all alone. He was carrying the sword of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) in his hand and the heart of Ali(a.s.) in his depths. On his tongue there was the word of piety. This was the very day the Prophet (s.a.w.) promised him and this was the place he told him would be his last abode. He called the enemy to fight him in single combat. One after the other came forward and were dispatched to the other world.

Imam Hussein(a.s.) was still very worried about his camp, which continued to burn.

When the forces of Ibn Sa'd cut him off from the camp, he called to the Umayyads:

"I am fighting you. Women have no blame. Prevent your villains from harassing my womenfolk as long as I am alive". [139]

A soldier directed an arrow at Imam Hussein(a.s.) which lodged in his throat. Spears and swords were eating into his body. He was weak from profuse bleeding while his body became a metaphor for a book, on which every sword blow or arrow had written the most majestic lines of an epic tale.

They were sixty-seven wounds,[140] silently reciting the story of struggle and jihad and indelibly inscribing the tragic chapters of oppression and injustice. The enemies were not yet satisfied. Shimr approached Imam Hussein (a.s.) carrying his sword and struck him several times, then he cut his head off. He carried the head proudly, to be placed in front of Ibn Ziyad as a bounty waiting its reward.

The head that never said "yes" to the oppressors, that was repeating:

"By Allah, I will never give you my hand like a man who has been humiliated, nor will I flee like a slave".

Thus the head was presented as a gift to Ibn Ziyad.

HUSSEIN'S STAR SETS

The dust settled and the horses no longer neighed. The swords were sheathed, while the spears bent their heads down. The world was gloomy as the sun hastened angrily to the west to set. The desert craned its neck, witnessing perhaps the most horrible crime comitted and the palm-trees collected their fronds cursing the fact they flourished so near the place of the dastardly deed. The wind was to make shrouds out of the sand to cover the mutilated bodies, scattered on the Kufan wasteland.

There lay Hussein(a.s.), the lord of the martyrs, 17 heroes from among his brothers, his sons, his brother's sons, his uncles' sons and nearly 60 giant companions, all beheaded, on the extended desert(141). Next to them was the camp of Hussein that hosted only the women and children. The only male present was Ali bin Hussein al-Sajjad (a.s.) the bed-ridden Imam who could not take part in the battle.

The horsemen began trampling spitefully on the bodies(142). Finishing that, they headed for Hussein's camp. The women and children took flight from the oncoming marauders. There was nowhere to take refuge. Voices calling Hussein(a.s.) sharply echoed:

"Where are you, O Hussein? Don't you see these ruthless bandits raiding your camp? Don't you hear the cries of the children? Don't you hear the women wailing?"

The savage soldiers broke into the camp. They began

plundering the helpless women and children. The little ones who wore gold earrings were seized and forcefully deprived of them. They tugged at their mothers dresses, with their ears bleeding. What could their mothers do except cry and run from the criminals' whips?

The severed heads were impaled on[143] spears and divided among the killers.

A long caravan set off for Kufa, led by the head-bearers. Khiwalla bin Yazid al-Asbahi, aided by Hamid bin Muslim al-Azdi, carried a long spear which held Hussein's head. The other heads were entrusted to Shimr bin Thil-Jawshan, Qays bin al-Ash'ath and Amru bin al-Hajjaj.

Let us now briefly pass to another time and listen to a poet[144], who stood at Karbala' thirteen centuries later, lamenting the loss of Hussein(a.s.). He speaks heart-rendingly, as if he has just witnessed the great massacre beside Zainab and al-Rabab.[145]

"They became bewildered for they had no answer to his advice, except shooting arrows and stabbing with spears, when the Umayyad savages deplored that the Prophet's heart was not torn apart, their swords preyed on Hussein's body, which became a place of prayer to the bowing scimitars. His heart shrivelled with dessication. If not for its granite content it would have evaporated completely. O alas, for your unclothed body on the dust, dressed only in bloody attire. His forehead was covered with dust, whereas every monotheist's eye wished it were his shroud. O alas for your head on that spear, wrapped in a veil of halos. He recites verses of the Book on the spear. Indeed they had lifted the Book on that selfsame lance. Let the Book of Allah wail for what it suffered. Let Islam shed tears for the loss...".

MARTYRS' DEATHS

The captives' caravan[146] comprising the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and their companions moved towards Kufa. In it were women, children and Ali bin Hussein as-Sajjad(a.s.)[147]. The martyr's bodies remained wind-swept, encircled by pools of blood.

Scattered on the battlefield were the decapitated bodies. Here was the body of Hussein(a.s.) and there prostrated the remains of Abbas.Nearby rested the corpses of the friends of Hussein(a.s.). They were all like stars on the earthly sky.

Al-Sajjad departed, heavily shackled, while his grieving heart was transfixed at the site of the martyrs. The holy caravan bid farewell to the lifeless heroes, wishing that they had been left behind with them.They departed, while that ground remained an inspiration for the poets to tearfully lament the tragedy.

Al-Sharif al-Radhi[148] looked back at the scene three centuries later and was still shocked at the cruelty of the dastards. He addressed himself to the Prophet (s.a.w.), condoling him over the martyrdom of his magnificent grandchild:

"They were guests in a barren desert, wherein they camped without food.

They tasted no water till they gathered, at sword point, to quench death's thirst...

The sun was eclipsed by the brightly blazing suns that were their bodies...

The wild animals tore their bodies: the bodies most precedent in faith.

Their faces were lanterns, they were waning moons and. falling stars.

O Apostle of Allah, if only you had witnessed them, some of them murdered and the others taken captive.

Even from shade were they deprived and though thirsty, they were stabbed with spears...

Then you would have witnessed a heart-rending scene, that filled the eyes with dust.

O ummah of injustice and tyranny, what a reward you had given the Apostle of Allah!

"You butchered his offspring as one would have done with sheep, then you drove his womenfolk like captives...

By his martyrdom, you dropped the pillars of religion and the banners of faith were forsaken.

They had killed him, though they knew he was the fifth person of the shawl group.(149)

"They carried a head, to whose grandfather they send blessings willingly or by force. He was the dead for whom Fatimah, her father, and the noble Ali wept. Should the Apostle of Allah live after him, he would have lamented for him...".

Let us leave the poet aside and have a look at the people from Bani Asad, inhabiting al-Ghadhiriyyah, near whose houses the battle took place. Upon the departure of the army of Umar bin Sa'd, they went out and examined the bodies that had been left for three days under the blazing sun and the sweeping wind, prey to the wild animals.(150)

"Some of Bani Asad, who had been staying at al-Ghadhiriyyah went to Hussein(a.s.), and his followers. They performed the funeral prayer over them. Then they buried Hussein(a.s.) at the place where his tomb still is and interred his son Ali bin Hussein al-Asghar (the infant) at the foot of the body. The graves dug around the area next to the feet of

Hussein(a.s.) were for the martyrs from his house and his followers. They gathered them and buried them altogether. However, they buried al-Abbas bin Ali(a.s.), in the place were he was killed, on the road to al- Ghadhiriyyah, where his tomb still is."[151]

Hussein's body remains near the Euphrates in Karbala',[152] a place where the faithfuls' hearts congregate; a beacon for revolutionaries. He joined the martyrs, the faithful, the good and the prophets and what excellent companions these are!

The Captives Return

THE CAPTIVES RETURN

The camels moved towards Kufa, carrying the household of Muhammad(s.a.w.) as Ibn Ziyad's captives. That was on the llth day of Muharram, the day after the massacre took place. The captives moved across the desert, haunted by the memories of the previous day and night, which they spent near the martyrs. They were surrounded by savages who took delight in listening to the wails of the girls and women and the moaning of Ali bin Hussein(a.s.) under the weight of both chains and sickness.

The captives entered Kufa. The people rushed to the streets. They were either ignorant, like those who wondered who the captives were, or knowing everything about the tragedy and thus struggling to hold back their tears while suffering the pangs of guilt.

The caravan pushed its way through the crowds, towards the governor's palace. The Kufans were in tears for the sufferings of the Prophet's household and for the most base and evil deed they themselves had acquiesced in. These people had deceived Hussein bin Ali(a.s.). They were now looking at his women and those of his companions, suffering under the brutish torture of Ibn Ziyad. That was the head of the lord of martyrs impaled on a long spear, instead of residing at the governor's palace to judge by the Book of Allah.

Zainab(a.s.) silently examined the gathering crowds, while tasting the bitterness of Hussein's loss. She looked at

them disdainfully and angrily and signalled to them to keep quiet. They all fell silent, waiting for what the sister of Hussein (a.s.) had to say:

"Praise be to Allah and divine blessings be sent on my father Muhammad and his good and exemplary descendants. O people of Kufa, O you who are deceitful and treacherous: Do you shed tears? May your tears never dry up and your loud lamentations never cease. You are like the woman that unravels to bits the thread which she has firmly spun. Your faith is nothing but deceit and betrayal. Are there any among you but the immodest, disgraced, proud spiteful, adulator, enemy and reviler? There are among you those who are as guileful as a beautiful plant growing in filth, or the silver on a grave. Certainly evil is that which your souls have sent before for you. Allah is displeased with you and in punishment shall you abide.

"Are you crying and wailing? Indeed, by Allah. Do cry endlessly and laugh but little, for your deed was so horrendously disgraceful that you will never be able to atone for it. How can you wash away the crime of murdering the scion of the Seal of the Prophets, the essence of the message, the lord of the youth in paradise, the refuge of your nobles, the refuge to whom you resorted during affliction, the bright divine proof of yours, your master who defended the Prophet's tradition.

"What an awful sin you did commit! Away with you, there will be no forgiveness for you. Certainly your efforts failed your hands suffered loss and your bargain is brought to naught. You have made yourselves deserving of the wrath of Allah. Abasement and humiliation have been brought down upon you.

"Woe to you! Do you know how you tore the liver of the Apostle of Allah? Whom of his womenfolk you exposed? What blood of his you shed? What honour of his you defamed?

"Your deed is most certainly so dangerously ugly and foul, that it filled the earth and sky with its putridness. Are you surprised that it rained blood? Certainly the punishment of the Hereafter is infinitely more abasing, and you shall not be helped. Don't make light of the delay of punishment in that it is not hastened by the fear of missing the taking of revenge. Most surely Allah is watching."

The sad procession moved through the streets of Kufa, in

the direction of the governor's palace. The captives of the household of Muhammad and those who shared with them witnessing the massacre of al-Taf, were brought before Ubaidullah bin Ziyad, who opened the doors of his palace to receive the people arriving to congratulate him on his victory.

He was rapturous, as he sat and in front of him was the head of Hussein(a.s.). He frequently poked the head with a cane. That mean act angered an old companion of the Prophet (s.a.w.). Zayd bin Arqam cried as he saw Ibn Ziyad poke the face of Hussein with his cane:

"Take your cane away from those two lips. For, by Allah, other than whom there is no deity, I have seen the lips of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) touch those lips countless times". With that he burst into tears.

"May Allah make your eye shed tears", said Ibn Ziyad. "Do you weep when Allah granted us victory? If it was not for the fact that you are an old man who has become senile and your mind has left you, I would have cut your head off."(153)

Zayd bin Arqam left the assembly of Ibn Ziyad angrily, drying his eyes as he saw the image of the Apostle of Allah carrying his beloved Hussein between his arms. As soon as Arqam disappeared, the captives were brought to the governer's palace.(154) The women and children and Ali bin Hussein al-Sajjad(a.s.) were brought into the presence of Ibn Ziyad.

Ibn Ziyad addressed the woman who raised the banner of her brother's uprising after his martyrdom,

"Praise be to Allah who disgraced you, killed you and revealed the false nature of your claims".(155)

The response was not long in coming. It was like a thunderbolt for Ziyad:

"Praise be to Allah Who has favoured us with his Prophet Muhammad(s.a.w.) and has purified us completely from sin.(156) He

only disgraces the great sinner and reveals the false nature of the profligate. Such men are not among us...". [157]

Ibn Ziyad and Zainab talked thus for some time when Ali bin Hussein al-Sajjad(a.s.) was marched in.

"Who are you?", Ibn Ziyad asked.

"I am Ali bin Hussein", he told him.

"Didn't Allah kill Ali bin Hussein?", asked Ibn Ziyad.

"I had a brother who was also named Ali", answered al-Sajjad, ***"the people killed him."***

"Rather Allah killed him", insisted Ibn Ziyad.

"Allah takes the souls at the time of their death", replied al-Sajjad.

With that Ibn Ziyad was very angry, so he called his men to take al- Sajjad away and cut his head off.

Zainab(a.s.) clung on to her nephew saying:

> ***"O Ibn Ziyad, haven't you had enough of our blood?... By Allah, I will not leave him. If you kill him, kill me with him".*** [158]

He yielded to Zainab's demand, then left his assembly for the mosque to make a speech and inform the people of the murder of Hussein(a.s.) and the victory of Yazid.

Present at the mosque was Abdullah bin Afif al-Azdi[159] He heard Ibn Ziyad say:

"Praise be to Allah who has revealed the truth and the followers of the truth and has given victory to the commander of the faithful Yazid and his party, and has killed the liar who is the son of a liar, and his Shi'a".[160]

Abdullah could not bear that and rose stoutly, challenging the Umayyad regime. He retorted:

"...do you kill the sons of the prophet and take the place of men of truth on the pulpit?"[161]

Ibn Ziyad was at the peak of his happiness but when Abdullah hurled those words, that awakened him from his dream. He had no choice but to save face by ordering the killing of Abdullah. However, 700 men of the Azdi tribe prevented him from arresting him.

Ubaidullah was not set at ease until he had resorted to deceit. In the late still of the night, he sent a group of his men to raid the house of Abdullah and arrest him. Subsequently he was killed and then crucified.

On the following day, Ubaidullah ordered that the head of Hussein(a.s.) be shown to the Kufans. He wanted to terrify them and silence any lingering spirit of resistence in them. It was paraded through the streets of Kufa. The noble head was returned to the palace, then sent to Syria; a star shining on a spear, a symbol that could not be silenced and a medal decorating history's chest.(162)

The caravan was fronted by the head of Hussein(a.s.) and the heads of the rest of the martyrs, followed by the women, children and Ali bin Hussein al-Sajjad(a.s.) who was so fettered with heavy chains that his neck bled. His hands were tied to his neck during the entire journey.

Zainab(a.s.) was following the head of her brother. Shortly after the sword of Hussein(a.s.) was put back into its sheath, she had taken upon herself the responsibility of continuing his message; a role she accomplished in a matchless and inimitable manner.

The caravan entered Damascus while the Umayyad spies were spreading rumours that the governor had defeated a group of the Kharijites and that these captives were their women and children. Out of their houses came the Syrians to watch the procession. Finally, the prisoners were presented to Yazid. The head was put in front of him and he looked at al-Sajjad.

"Son of Hussein", he said to him, "your father cut the bond of kinship with me and displayed ignorance of my rights, trying to deprive me of my position of authority. Now Allah has treated him in the way you have seen."(163)

Al-Sajjad(a.s.) immediately said:

﴿مَا أصابَ مِن مُصيبةٍ فِي الأرضِ ولا فِي أنفُسكم إلاَّ فِي كِتابٍ مِن قَبلِ أن نَبرأها

إنَّ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ﴾.

(٢٢:٥٧)

"No evil befalls on the earth nor in your own souls, but it is in a book before We bring it into existence; surely that is easy to Allah". (164)

Holy Qur'an (57:22)

Al-Sajjad and the captives remained in Syria for a time, then they returned to Karbala' on their way to Madinah, bringing with them the heads to be buried with their bodies. Finally they entered Madinah. The news had already been spread among the people who raised their voices in weeping and lamentation. They were saddened deeply when they listened to Bishr bin Hathlam who declared:

"O people of Yathrib! there is no place for you to stand here, for Hussein has been murdered. My tears flow heavily. His body is still bloody at Karbala', while his head is carried on a long spear".

Madinah lived through a period of depression and anger until it revolted against the Umayyad regime. This was precipitated when Abdullah bin Handhalah rose against the governor of Madinah.

IMPACT OF THE UPRISING ON THE MUSLIM UMMAH

The value of any purposive religious or political action is estimated according to its results. Political and social actions may bear their fruit directly, still results may lag behind actions in terms of time. The aftershocks remain to interact and leave their traces long after the key events have taken place.

The impact of a given political or social event may be temporary and limited in place and time. Sometimes the impact may extend over a long period and extensive area.

Hussein's uprising was certainly a great one, with limitless impact and divergent objectives. It was not confined purely to taking power, though political power was of extreme importance in the view of Hussein(a.s.), for positively changing the social conditions and reforming the community. His mission had several short-range and long-range objectives. He viewed political power as his father did:

"O Allah, You know that what we have done was not a contest to take power, or aimed at seeking to possess the remnants of worldly trivia. We wanted, indeed, to restore the lost aspects of Your faith and revive Your laws that were being ignored, so that the oppressed may feel secure".

Imam Hussein(a.s.) had the following goals in mind when he started his uprising:

1. Changing of the political conditions, the ruling system and the way of administering civil affairs, and treating the

ummah in accordance with the divine standards set forth by Islam.

2. Awakening the political conscience of the ummah and making a powerful oversight body out of it, lest the ruler deviate or neglect Islamic laws.

3. Emphasizing the legality of militarily opposing the unjust ruler.

4. Re-educating the ummah in line with Islamic laws.

5. Rectifying deviation and putting into practice the shariah.

6. Breaking the wall of fear and terror that was imposed on the ummah and stirring the spirit of revolution and sacrifice in it.

As soon as Hussein(a.s.) stood against the regime, he was sure that his movement would not succeed militarily, but that it would be the starting point of large scale opposition. Accordingly, explosions and upheavals commenced and the regime reached the edge of collapse. The government swayed and lost the last threads connecting it to the ummah. It then resorted to oppression and terror as a means to silence any opposing voice and suppress liberties. The ummah began to feel the weight of having abandoned Hussein(a.s.) to the hands of the oppressors. A series of armed uprisings sprouted, weakening the Umayyads and ending finally in the fall of that regime. Hussein's blood was thus the key element in precipitating its downfall.

His revolt smoothed the way for Abdullah bin al-Zubayr to move at Makkah, declaring war against the regime. His movement almost engulfed Makkah before it was defeated at the hands of the Umayyads.

A statement, recorded by history, vividly describes the wide ranging effects of Hussein's uprising. Al-Ya'qoobi mentioned that, a man said: "Once I went to see Abdul-Malik bin Marwan. I saw him with the head of Musa'b bin al-Zubayr placed in front of him".

"O commander of the faithful", I said, "I have seen in this place something astonishing." "What did you see?" asked Ibn Marwan.

"I saw the head of Hussein bin Ali(a.s.) put in front of Ubaidullah bin Ziyad and I saw the head of Ubaidullah bin Ziyad put in front of Mukhtar bin Ubaidah and I saw the head of Mukhtar bin Ubaidah laid in front of Musa'b bin al-Zubayr and I saw the head of Musa'b bin al-Zubayr placed in front of you!"(165)

The people of Madinah rose against the governor of Yazid in Madinah, Uthman bin Muhammad bin Abi-Sufyan. They turned him out of the city along with his entourage. As mentioned, Abdullah bin Handhalah bin Abi Amir,i 'the one washed by the angels', lead the people of Madinah. But the Syrian army attacked the city(166) and this led to the shedding of blood and violation of the sanctuaries.The city of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) was violated. Al-Ya'qoobi summed up the awful sequences of the uprising at the hands of the Umayyads, in the following words:

"...great numbers of people were killed and the sanctuary of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) was allowed for the soldiers, so much so that virgins gave birth to babies whose fathers were unknown. The people were forced to give their pledge of allegiance as slaves to Yazid bin Mu'awiyah".(167)

Those events expose how much the people understood the nature of the character of Yazid, and reminds us of the statement of Abdullah bin Muti' to Imam Hussein(a.s.): "By Allah, should you be killed, we would be enslaved after you".

Uprisings began to raise the slogan of taking vengeance for Imam Hussein's killing by the Umayyads. The slogan gradually took a political form and became a motivating force.

At Kufa, there was the movement of the *Tawwabeen* (repentants) led by Sulyman bin Sird al-Khuza'i and al-

Musayyab bin Najbah al-Fazari.

Shortly after that there were the uprisings of al-Mukhtar bin Ubaidah al-Thaqafi and Ibrahim bin Malik al-Ashtar in 66 A.H. They adopted the slogan 'Vengeance for Hussein's Murder'. They tracked the killers of Hussein(a.s.) and killed all of them, including Ubaidullah bin Ziyad, Hossyn bin Numayr and Umar bin Sa'd.

The opposition continued its armed actions till the Abbassids overthrew the Umayyad regime. They called for propaganda reasons only, for the restoring of the rule to the household of the Prophet (s.a.w.).

Imam Hussein kindled the flame of revolt against the Umayyads till their destruction. They wanted to destroy him but lost their power due to that very crime.

Hussein(a.s.) remains forever: a slogan for the revolutionaries, a lighthouse for the free and a source of struggle and liberation.

Peace be on him on the day he was born and on the day he was martyred and on the day he is raised to life.

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the world.

FOOTNOTES

I) Shaikh al-Mufid (died 412 A.H.)/ al-Irshad (the Guidance)/ p.198.
2) It is narrated that Fatimah al-Zahra' (a.s.) was six-months pregnant when she gave birth to him. Thakha'ir al-Uqba (Treasures of the Hereafter)/ Muhibuddin al-Tabari (died 694 A.H.)/ p.118.
3) Ibid/ p.124.
4) Ibid.
5) Ibid/ p.123.
6) Ibid/ p.229.
7) Ibid/ p.129.
8) Ibid/ p.124.
9) Ibid/ pp.126-127.
10) Ibid/ p.129.
11) One of those who fought the battle of Ashura' described him in these words: 'I have never seen a person bereaved of his sons, menfolk and his companions more lion-hearted than him. The foot soldiers were scattering to the right and left of him like goats when a wolf comes upon them', Ibn al-Atheer/ al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh/ vol.4/ p.77.

12) A'ishah was the wife of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) and the daughter of the second caliph Abu-Bakr.
13) Maqatil al-Talibiyyin (The Deaths of al-Talibiyyin)/ Abul-Faraj al- Isfahani/ p.38.
14) Al-Fusool al-Muhimmah (The Important Chapters)/Ibn al-Sabbagh al-Maliki/ p.163.
15) Tarikh al-Khulafa' (The History of the Caliphs)/Jalaluddin al- Sayooti/ p.191.
16) Sulh al-Hassan (The Peaceful Agreement of Imam Hassan)/ Shaikh Radhi Aal- Yasin/p.260. Quoted from Umdat al-Talib (The Prop of the Seeker)/ Ibn al- Muhannah (died 911 A.H.).
17) Jalaluddin al-Sayooti/ Ibid/ p.191.

18) Ibn al-Sabbagh al-Maliki/ Ibid/ p.163.
19)Ibid.
20) Shaikh al-Mufid/ al-Irshad (The Guidance)/ p.191.
21) Imam al-Hassan (a.s.) was martyred in the year 50 A.H. in the month of Safar or Rabi' al-Awwal.
22) Mu'awiyah did that in the wake of the martyrdom of Imam Hassan (a.s.).
Some say he declared that before the martyrdom of Imam Hassan (a.s.).
23) Jalaluddin al-Sayooti/ Tarikh al-Khulafa' (History of the Caliphs/ pp. 196-197.
24) Shaikh al-Mufid/ibid/ p.200.
25) Ibn al-Atheer/ al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh (The Complete Accounts of History)/ vol.4/ p.14.
26) Mu'awiyah died in the month of Rajab, in the year 60 A.H.
27) Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid.
28) Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ p.15.
29) Ibid.
30) Ibn al-Sabbagh al-Maliki/ Ibid/ p.182.
31) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/Maqtal al-Hussein (a.s.) (The Story of the Martyrdom of Imam Hussein (a.s.)/ pp.10-11.
32) Al-Khawarizmi/ Maqtal al-Hussein (The Story of the Martyrdom of Imam Hussein (a.s.)/ vol.1/ p.88.
33) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ Ibid/ p.11.
34) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p.204.
35) Abdul-Razzaq al-Muqqaram/ Maqtal al-Hussein (a.s.)/ pp.141-142.
36) Tarikh al-Tabari/ vol.7/ p.104., quoted by Shaikh Radhi Aal-Yasin in his book 'Sulh Imam al-Hassan (a.s.)' (The Peace treaty of Imam Hassan (a.s.)/ p.320.
37) Shaikh Radhi Aal Yaseen/ Sulh Imam al-Hassan (a.s.)/ p.328.

38) Allamah al-Majlisi/Bihar al-Anwar (Seas of Lights)/ vol.10/ p.149, quoted by Shaikh Radhi Aal-Yasin in his book 'Sulh Imam al-Hasan (a.s.)'/ p.338.
39) Ibid/ p.328.
40) Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ vol.3/ p.462.
41) Ibid/ p.462.
42) Al-Mas'oodi/ Murooj al-Thahab (The Tracts of Gold)/ vol.3/ p.14.
43) Ibn al-Atheer/Ibid/ vol.4/ p.12.
44) Ibid/ vol.3/ p.413.
45) Al-Mas'oodi/ Ibid/ vol.3/ p.183-184.
46) Ibid/ vol.3/ p.23.
47) Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ vol.3/ p.91.

48) Ibn Qutayba al-Daynoori/ al-Ma'arif (Knowledge)/ p.84.
49) Ibid/ p.84.
50) Al-Mas'oodi/ Ibid/vol.2/ p.333.
5l) Tabaqat bin Sa'd (Classes of bin Sa'd)/ vol.3/ part one/ p.l05, quoted by Shaikh Muhammad Hassan Aal-Yaseen/ p.l36.
52) Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ vol.2/ p.333.
53) Al-Mas'oodi/ Ibid/vol.3/ pp.67-68.
54) Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ vol.4/ p.l6.
55) Ibid/ p.l7.
56) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ Ibid/ p.l2.
57) Ibid/ p.l4.
58) Maqtal Abi-Makhnaf (The Story of the Martyrdom of al-Hussein (a.s.) by Abi-Makhnab, from which Abdul-Karim al-Qazwini quoted the foregoing text in his book 'Al-Watha'iq Al-Rasmiyyah li-Thawrat Imam al-Hussein (a.s.)' (The Official Documents of Imam Hussein's Uprising)/ p.45.

59) Shaikh al-Mufid mentioned in his book (al-Irshad)/ p.20l, that Imam Hussein set off for Makkah in the year 60 A.H., two days before the end of the month of Rajab.
60) Shaikh al-Mufid /Ibid.
6l) Ibn al-Atheer /Ibid/ vol.4/ p.l9.
62) The distance between Madinah and Makkah is about 450 kilometres.
63) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p.202.
64) Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani/ Ibid/ p.59.
65) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p.202.
66) Ibid.
67) Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ vol.4/ p.20.
68) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p.204.
69) Abdul-Razzaq al-Muqqaram/ Ibid/ pp.l4l-l42.
70) Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ vol.4/ p.2l.
7l) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ Ibid/ p.l7.
72) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos maintained that this letter was the last one sent to Imam Hussein (a.s.) from the Kufans. It was carried by Hani bin Hani al-Sabi'i and Sa'id bin Abdullah al-Hanafi. 'Tell me', Imam Hussein asked them, " Who were those who decided to write this letter you were charged with its delivering to me?". 'O Son of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.),' they replied, 'they were: Shabath bin Ribi', Hajjar bin Abjur, Yazid bin al- Harith bin Ruwaym, Urwah bin Qays, Amru bin al-Hajjaj, and Muhammad bin Umayr bin Atarud or (Muhammad bin Amru al-Tamimi). This was mentioned also by Shaikh al-Mufid in his book 'al-Irshad'/ p.203.
73) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ Ibid/ pp.l5-l6.
74) Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ vol.4/ p.2l.

75) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p.204.
76) Ibid.
77) Al-Mas'oodi/ Ibid/ p.54.
78) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p.205.
79) Ubaydullah bin Ziyad was, at the time, the governor of Basrah, but he deputised his brother Uthman and headed for Kufa.
80) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p.206.
8l) Ibid.
82) Ibid.
83) Ibid.
84) Ibid.
85) Ibid/ p.207.
86) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos mentioned that fighting broke out between Muslim's supporters and the loyalists of Ubaidullah bin Ziyad. 'Maqtal al-Hussein (a.s.)'/ p.22.
87) In his forementioned book, Sayyid Ibn Tawoos refers to these developments. He says,: Night began to fall. The followers of Muslim began gradually to disperse, saying to each other, 'What good do we make by hurrying into sedition?' We have to stay in our homes and leave these two parties till Allah reconcile them'. By so doing, only ten persons were then left with Muslim. After offering his prayer, however, these ten men left him also./ Maqtal al-Hussein (a.s.)/ p.22.

88) These incidents occurred on Tuesday the 8th of Thil-Hijjah 60 A.H.
89) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p.2l3.
90) Al-Hossyn bin Numayr was the chief of police in Kufa.
9l) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p.2l3.
92) One of which was that he had a debt in Kufa. So he asked Ibn Sa'd to sell his sword and armour to pay it for him.
93) Muslim bin Aqeel and Han bin Urwah were martyred at Kufa, on Wednesday, the 9th of Thil-Hujjah 60 A.H. Each of them, today has a mausoleum and are visited by the believers.
94) Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ vol.4/ p.47.
95) Ibid/ p.39.
96) Imam Hussein's statement proved accurate. Abdullah bin al-Zubayr, after many years, took refuge in Makkah. Yazid sent an army to Makkah, which laid seige to it. The city was catapulted with huge stones, then set on fire. Once again, Ibn al-Zubayr was attacked, and the Ka'ba was catapulted during Abdul-Malik bin Marwan's rule. Ibn al-Zubayr, was eventually killed by al-Hajjaj bin Yusuf al-Thaqafi who led a tremendous army. His head, and those of his companions were cut off and dispatched to Abdul-Malik bin Marwan. As for his body, it was crucified.

Here, Imam Hussein (a.s.) is telling Ibn al-Zubayr of his inevitable fate.
97) Ibn al-Atheer/ p.38.
98) Ibid.
99) Ibid/ p.41.
100) Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ p.40.
101) The mother of Abdullah bin Yaqtar was Imam Hussein's wet nurse.
102) Al-Ya'qoobi mentioned that Imam Hussein (a.s.) heard of Muslim's martyrdom at Qatqatanah. Murooj al-Thahab/ vol.4/ p.243.
103) Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ p.43.
104) Refers to the great numbers of the horses.
105) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p.225.
106) Ibid/ p.226.
107) Ibid/ p.226.
108) Zuhayr bin al-Qayn was one of Imam Hussein's followers who joined him during his journey at a place called Zurood. He once spoke in praise of Imam Hussein (a.s.) to his companions praisingly saying: We participated in a battle at Lanjar and won it over. We gained very much booty and were very happy. When Salman al-Farsi saw how much happy we were he noted: 'If you catch up with the Lord of the Youth of the household of Muhammad (s.a.w.) you ought to be happier because of your fighting with him than winning war booty'. Abdul-Razzaq al-Muqqaram/ Maqtal al-Hussein (a.s.)/ p.178, quoted from: Tarikh al-Tabari/ vol.6/ p.224.
109) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ Ibid/ pp.32-33.
110) Ibid/ p.33.
111) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid/p .227. Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ vol.4/ p.52. Thus the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (a.s.) took place on Friday, not on Thursday as it is widely accepted.
112) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ Ibid/ p.33. Shaikh al-Mufid mentioned on the authority of Ali bin Imam Hussein al-Sajjad (a.s.) that Imam Hussein (a.s.) was repeating the verse at the night of the 10th of Muharram.
113) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ Ibid/ p.34.
114) Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ vol.4/ pp.52-53.
115) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p.229.
116) Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ vol.4/ p.48.
117) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p.230.
118) It took Imam Hussein (a.s.) about thirty days to travel from Madinah to Makkah and from Madinah to Karbala', during which he travelled about two thousand kilometres.
119) The battle of Ashura' took place at Karbala'. Imam Hussein (a.s.) was laid to rest their. Karbala' is more than 75 kilometres from Najaf where Imam Ali (a.s.) was buried.

i20) Some historians called him Uzrah.
l2l) Some historians called him Thuwayd.
l22) This invocation was reported by Shaikh al-Mufid in his book 'al-Irshad'/ p.233, quoting from Imam Ali bin Hussein al-Sajjad (a.s.) who had witnessed the battle of Karbala' but did not take part in it due to his sickness. Also present at Karbala' was his son Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) who was four years old. Al-Sajjad (a.s.) said: "When the cavalry approached Imam Hussein (a.s.), he raised his hands and said: "O Allah, it is You...etc".
l23) Burayer was one of the teachers of Qur'anic recitation at Kufa.
l24) Abdul-Razzaq al-Muqqaram/ Ibid/ p.223.
l25) Ibid.
l26) Ibid.
l27) Imam Hussein's statement proved true. Umar bin Sa'd gained nothing but shame and disgrace. He was killed at the hands of al-Mukhtar bin Ubaidah al-Thaqafi at Kufa. See Ibn al-Atheer/ vol.4/ p.24l. The events of the year 66 A.H.
l28) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p.236.
l29) Abdul-Razzaq al-Muqqaram/ Ibid/ p.237.
l30) Ibid.

l3l) Ibid/ pp.238-239.
l32) It was reported that he and his companions prayed by nodding their heads as they had no time to pray as usual. It was reported also that they offered the prayer of fear.
l33) Al-Hassan II was injured but was carried away and cured. He did not attain martyrdom.
l34) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ Ibid/ p.49.
l35) The one who shot the arrow was Harmala bin Kahil. Historians reported that the baby was murdered prior to his uncle al-Abbas.
l36) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ Ibid/ p.49.
l37) Shaikh Al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p.240. Al-Abbas bin Ali (a.s.) was the half-brother of Imam Hussein (a.s.). His mother was Umm al-Banin Fatimah the daughter of Hizam al-Kalbi.
l38) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p.240.
l39) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ Ibid/ p.50.
l40) The wounds of Imam Hussein (a.s.) numbered thirty-three spear stabs and thirty-four sword strikes besides the arrow inflicted wounds.
l4l) Ibn al-Sabbagh al-Maliki/ Ibid/ p.l93./Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/Ibid/ p.60.
l42) Umar bin Sa'd ordered ten of the killers to trample the body of Imam Hussein (a.s.). Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ Ibid/ p.56.

143) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos reported that the heads totalled seventy-eight. They were divided among the tribes, to win Ibn Ziyad's favour. Kinda, represented by Qays bin al-Ash'ath, won 13 heads, Hawazin, represented by Shimr bin Thil-Jawshan, won 12 heads, Tamim 17, Bani Asad 16, Mithhaj 7 and the rest of the people took 13 heads. Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ Ibid/ pp. 60-61.

144) He is the jurisprudent poet Sayyid Ridha al-Hindi.

145) Al-Rabab was a wife of Imam Hussein (a.s.). She was the daughter of Imru' al-Qays and the mother of Sukainah (Aminah) and Abdullah, the baby that was killed in the battle.

146) They set off for Kufa on the 11th day of Muharram in the afternoon.

147) Some narrations state that al-Hassan II the son of Imam Hassan bin Ali (a.s.) the brother of Imam Hussein (a.s.) was alive, because he did not attain martyrdom, though he was wounded.

148) One of the greatest Arabic poets, and one of the prominent jurisprudents. He was the poet of the jurisprudents and the jurisprudent of the poets. He lived in the 4th century A.H. One of his glorious works was the collection of the sermons and letters of Imam Ali (a.s.), in a book called Nahjul-Balaghah (Peaks of Eloquence).

149) Once the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.), Ali, Fatimah, Hassan and Hussein (a.s.) gathered under a shawl. The Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) prayed for them and their followers. They are referred to as the 'As'hab al-Kisa' (The Companions of the Shawl).

150) Sayyid Ibn Tawoos/ Ibid/ p.61.

151) Shaikh Al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p.243.

152) The holy city of Karbala' is situated to the west of the Euphrates, on the edges of the Syrian desert. It is about 103 kilometres away from the Iraqi capital Baghdad. At Karbala' there is the mausoleum of Imam Hussein (a.s.), which is the paragon of beauty. It is covered with gold and silver and has a dome and minarats. It is visited, every year, by millions of people.

153) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p.243.

154) The caravan of the captives arrived in Kufa one day later than the arrival of Imam Hussein's head.

155) Shaikh Al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p.244.

156) She refers to the noble verse: "Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a (thorough) purifying" Holy Qur'an (33:33)

157) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid/ p.244.

158) Ibid.

159) Abdullah bin Afif al-Azdi was a follower of Imam Ali (a.s.).

160) Ibid.
161) Ibid.
162) Zajr bin Qays was charged with carrying the heads of Imam Hussein (a.s.) and that of his companions to Yazid bin Mu'awiyah in Damascus.
163) Shaikh al-Mufid/ Ibid.
164) Ibid.
165) Al-Ya'qoobi/ vol.2/ p.265. Sa'id bin al-Musayyab described the rule of Yazid as the ominous years. For in the first year Imam Hussein bin Ali (a.s.) and his menfolk were killed. In the second year the sanctuary of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.) was violated. Blood was shed in the House of Allah, and the House was burnt in the third year. Ibid/ p.253.
166) The battle was named Waq'at al-Hurrah. It took place two days from the end of Thil-Hijjah 63 A.H. Ibn al-Atheer/ Ibid/ vol.4/ p.120.
167) Al-Ya'qoobi/ vol.2/ p.250.